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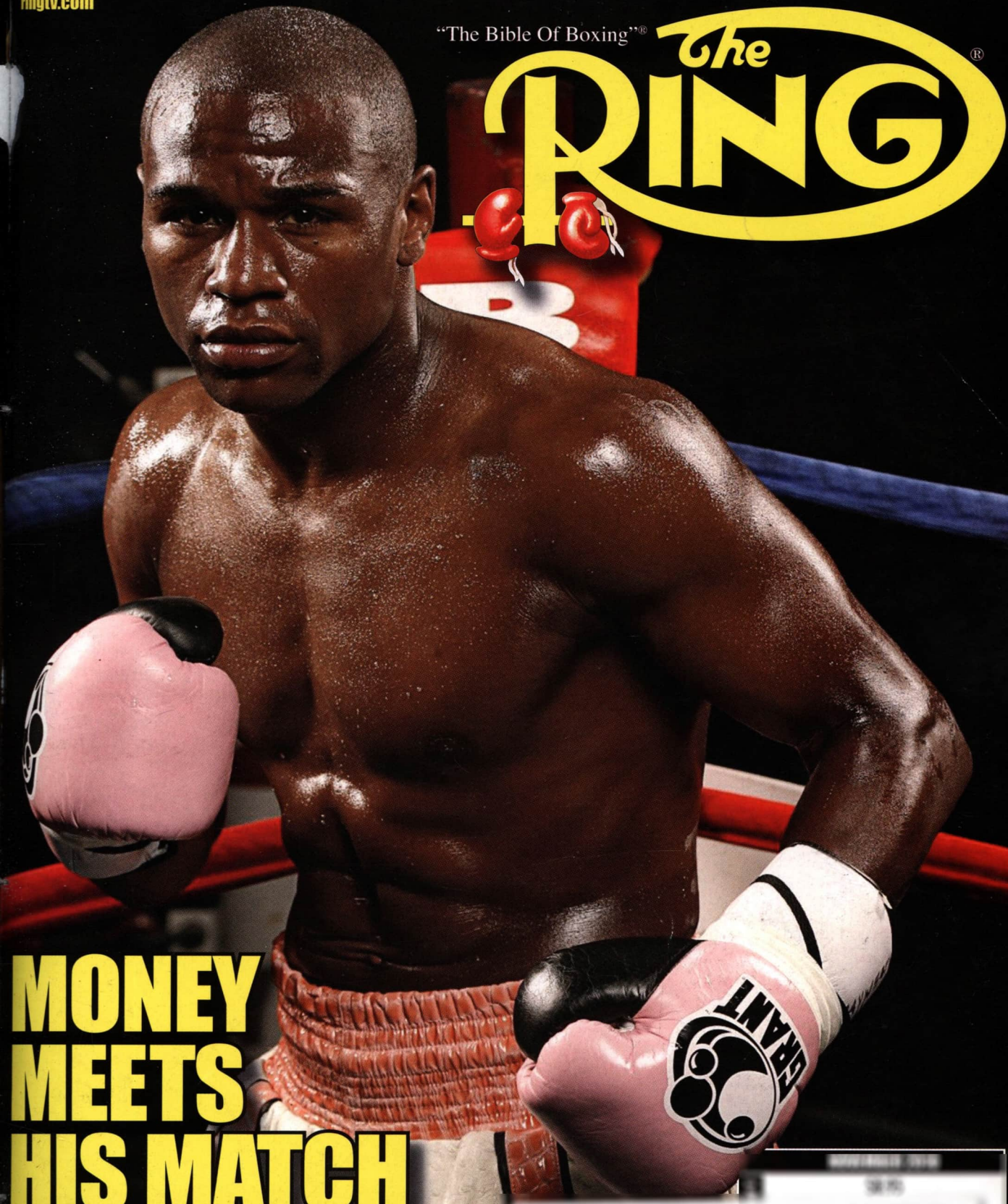
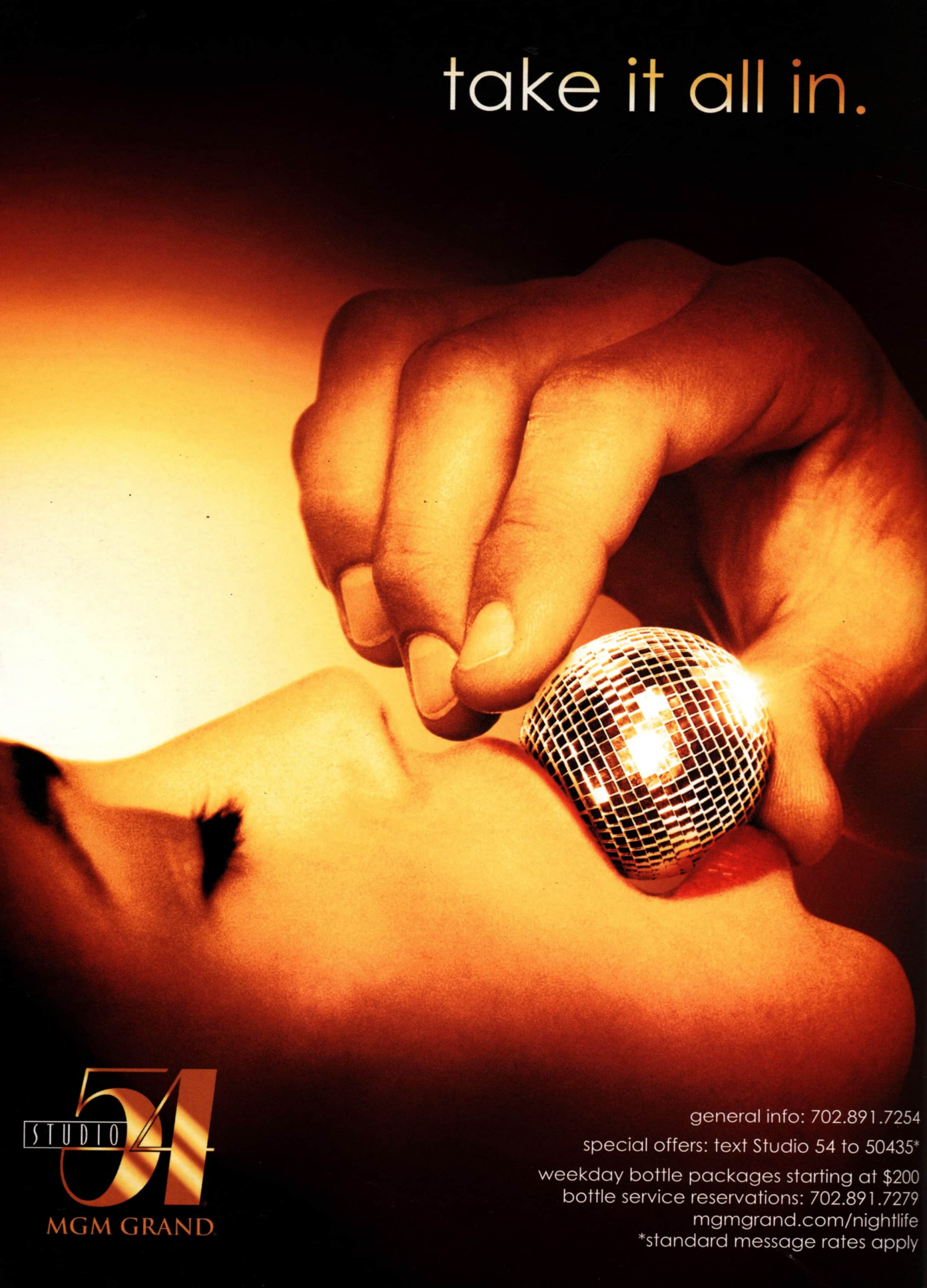


MONEY MEETS HIS MATCH

10 Guys Who Would Hav
Kicked Mayweather's B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Volume 89, No. 12 November 2010

The RING

The Horns Of A Dilemma

Despite strong opposition and much righteous indignation, Texas has granted Antonio Margarito a boxing license, clearing the way for the disgraced Mexican to fight Manny Pacquiao at Cowboys Stadium on November 13. The result has been a game changer: Instead of getting bent out of shape because Pacquiao isn't fighting Floyd Mayweather, a lot of folks have a new beef to chew on. Now they're up in arms because Margarito—who was caught trying to fight Shane Mosley with loaded gloves—has been granted permission to again fight in the United States.

The outrage is understandable and justified. What Margarito attempted is arguably the worst sin a boxer can commit, and had he been caught *after* the fight, both Margarito and his trainer, Javier Capetillo, would probably be behind bars today.

If I had to guess, I'd say that Margarito knew his hands were loaded and that he had fought before with doctored wraps. But if I were accused of a vile act, I wouldn't want my fate decided by conjecture. Neither would any of the people calling for Margarito's head.

A strong argument can be made that the California commission should have banned Margarito forever instead of revoking his license for a year. But it didn't, and we can't turn back the hands of time. Legally, there is nothing to stop the Pacquiao-Margarito fight from happening, a fact of life that we have to accept whether we like it or not.

People don't have to watch the fight. Nobody is going to force anybody to buy a ticket or purchase the pay-per-view. It's up to boxing consumers to vote with their wallets. At this point, there is no better way of showing displeasure with Margarito's return to the ring—and Pacquiao's willingness to accommodate him—than to boycott the fight.

Promoter Bob Arum is gambling that Pacquiao's stature as the most popular fighter in the world and the publicity generated by controversy will sell the fight. And it just might work.

Pacquiao and Joshua Clottey attracted more than 50,000 fans to Cowboys Stadium and sold approximately 700,000 pay-per-views for their March fight, even though, outside of hardcore boxing circles, few had ever heard of Clottey before the fight was announced. Margarito is already notorious due to the loaded-gloves scandal and will be even more so after hundreds of virtually identical columns are written, ripping him, the fight, and boxing in general.

Nobody will be asking, "Who is this Margarito guy?"

The final verdict will not be rendered until after the fight is over and all the loot from the various revenue channels has been counted. At the end of the day, it will be the boxing consumer who decides whether or not Margarito is somebody he or she will pay to see fight, which is only fitting, as they will be footing the bill.

Those expecting THE RING to take a sanctimonious stance will be disappointed. Many of our writers have expressed their feelings about what has transpired in no uncertain terms and will continue to do so. THE RING, however, will not boycott the fight. Furthermore, the December issue will feature the sort of in-depth preview that readers have come to expect prior to major fights.

It is THE RING's job to present as many of the facts as possible and offer a variety of opinions. Ultimately, this is a case that should be decided, not by the media, but by the marketplace, usually the best arbitrator when commerce and principles collide.

Nigel Collins
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[Opening Shot]

Upside Your Head

Tavoris Cloud had his hands full with former light heavyweight champion Glen Johnson but prevailed in a hard-fought 12-rounder, thanks to shots like this right to the noggin. It was Cloud's first defense of the IBF trinket, but, if he wants to claim the true 175-pound championship, he'll have to look up a certain Monsieur Pascal in Montreal.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

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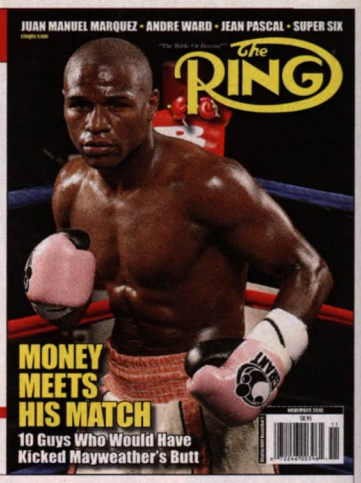

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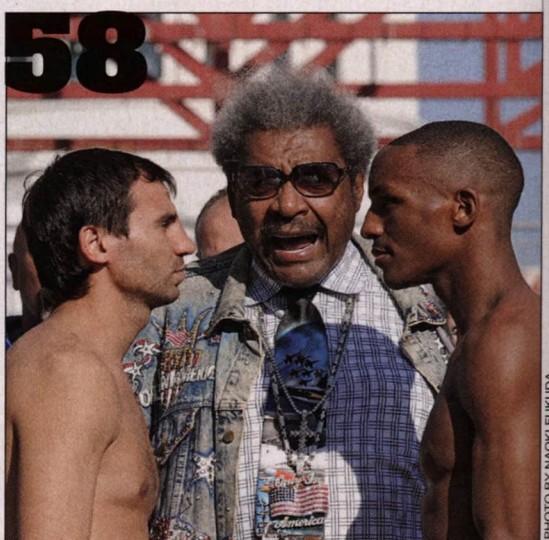

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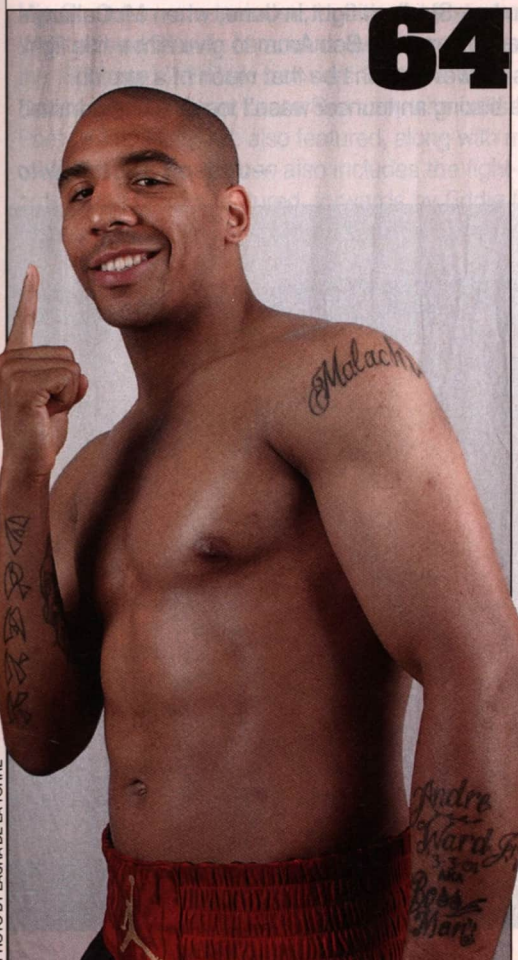

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New Boxing Drama To Debut On FX

The Sweet Science will get some positive exposure in January 2011, with the debut of a new television series on FX called *Lights Out*. The weekly hour-long drama will tell the story of Patrick "Lights Out" Leary, a former heavyweight world champion who has retired and is struggling to find his identity outside the ring.

Holt McCallany (from *CSI: Miami*) will play the lead role as the aging former fighter doing a variety of different things to support his wife and three daughters. The story follows "Lights" as he delves into an underworld as a mob enforcer, battles oncoming pugilistic dementia, and urges to make a comeback.

There doesn't seem to be anything chintzy about the production. The Executive Producer is Warren Leight (*Law & Order: Criminal Intent*) in collaboration with Creator/Executive Producer Justin Zackham (*The Bucket List*).

It will also feature some top names, like Catherine McCormack (Mel Gibson's wife in *Braveheart*) as Leary's wife, veteran actor Stacy Keach as his father, and Pablo Schreiber (*Law & Order*) as Leary's brother and business manager. You'll also see many, many familiar faces from boxing, such as Showtime color analyst Steve Farhood, who appears on three episodes and plays, well, Steve Farhood.

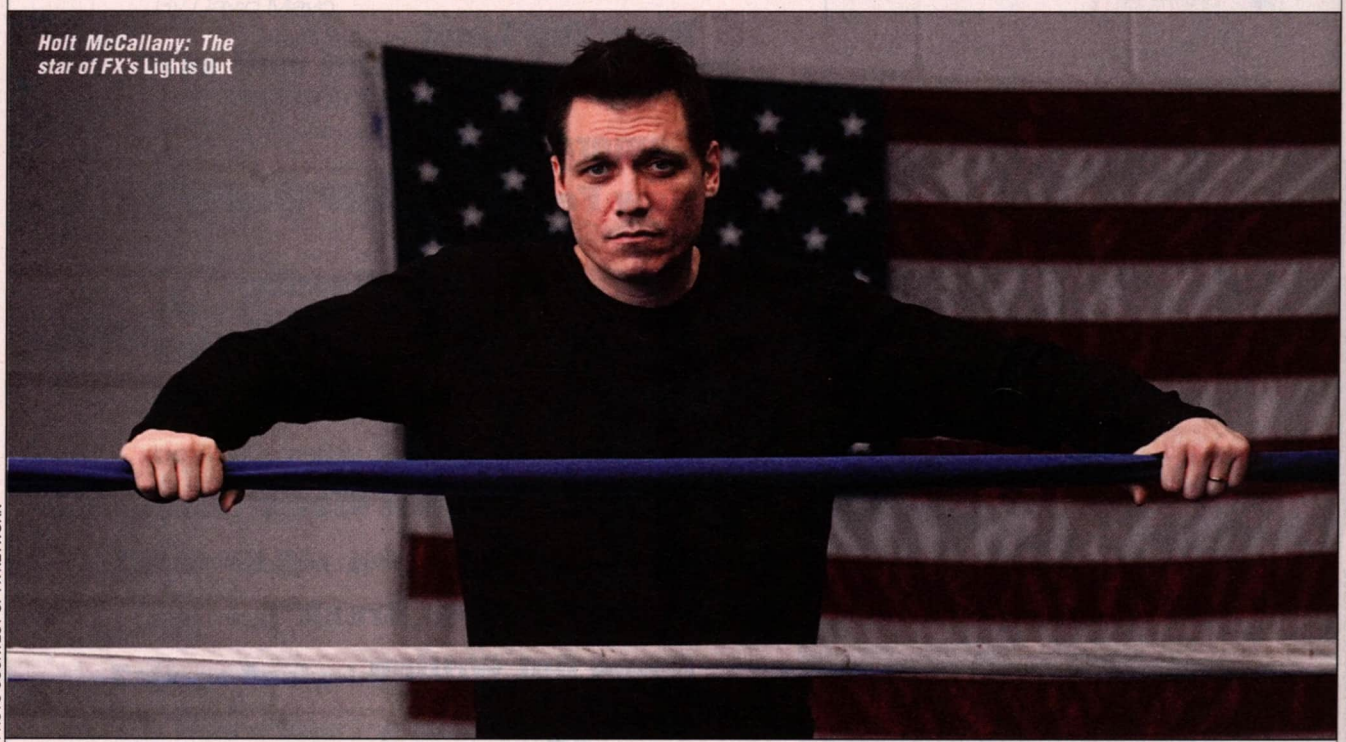
"I was a consultant on *a Law & Order: Criminal Intent* episode that was produced by Warren Leight, that's the connection with *Lights Out*," Farhood said. "The whole thing is a lot different from what I do as a boxing commentator. First off, there's a script that you have to follow. You shoot every scene seven or eight times, and third, you're working with professional actors, which I'm not. I found it challenging but fun.

"What I like is the cast and the production value behind it. They humanized the star, Holt's character, into a multi-dimensional person. We view our action heroes as cartoon figures. The *Lights Out* character is very real, and he goes through real things. The other plus is that I think the show does help boxing. Any primetime exposure for the sport, when a number of real boxing people are involved, is always a good thing."

FX is locked into a 12-show first season for *Lights Out*. The original episode opens five years after Leary loses his final fight for the heavyweight world title. What boxing fans might get a kick out of is seeing actual boxing people involved. A scene was even shot at the Miguel Cotto-Yuri Foreman Yankee Stadium fight in June, when McCallany's character tries to convince Bob Arum to give him a title fight. Some things, however, won't be that much of a stretch.

"Playing a boxing announcer wasn't too difficult," admitted Farhood.

—Joseph Santoliquito



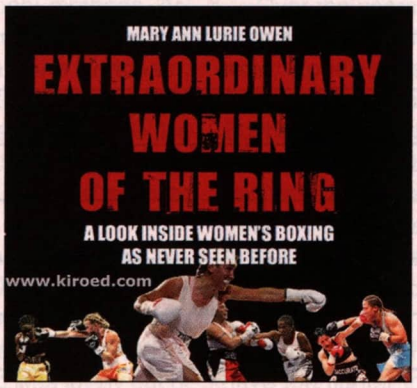
Holt McCallany: The star of FX's Lights Out

PHOTO COURTESY OF FX NETWORK

Boxing Bookshelf

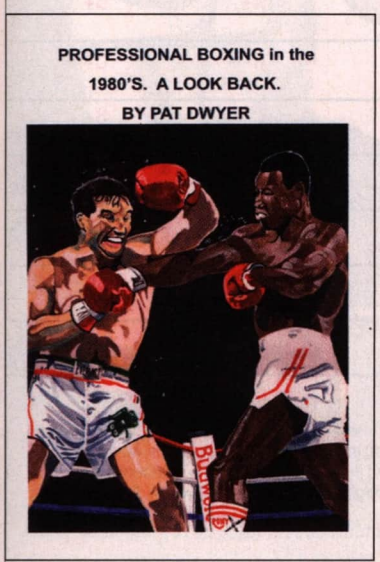
Although precious few become best sellers, publishers continue to churn out boxing books at an alarming rate. This has caused something of a backlog at THE RING, so this issue, rather than the usual in-depth review of one or two books, we are presenting brief overviews of four books, two new offerings and two recent paperback reprints of classic works.

Photographer-turned-writer Mary Ann Lurie Owen, whose images occasionally appear in THE RING, has long been associated with women's boxing and has turned her passion into *Extraordinary Women Of The Ring: A look Inside Women's Boxing As Never Seen Before* (Kirographaires Editions, 270 pages, paperback, $34.95). The meat of this richly illustrated volume, for which Owen took all the photographs, are the biographies of 47 female fighters.

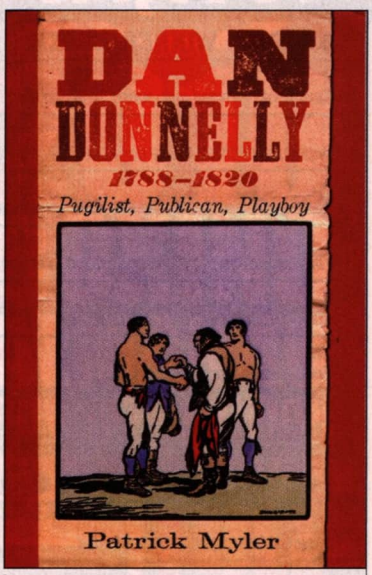


All the famous names—Laila Ali, Christy Martin, Lucia Rijker, Mia St. John—are included, but it's not just about the stars. Well-traveled Belinda Laracuante (whose record hovers around the .500 mark), British pioneers Barbara Buttrick and Jane Couch, and Mexican Laura Serrano, who calls herself "The Poet Of The Ring" are also featured, along with many others.

Extraordinary Women also includes the fight-by-fight records of the boxers featured, forwards by Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, Freeda Foreman, and Jackie Kallen, an afterword by Jean-Claude Bouttier, info on the various sanctioning bodies, and a timeline of female boxing history. It all adds up to a nifty package that is recommended to anyone with even a passing interest in women's boxing.



Professional Boxing In The 1980s: A Look Back is a slim self-published labor of love by Pat Dwyer. There are 10 chapters, one for each year of the decade, featuring recaps of famous fights involving such legendary figures as Larry Holmes, Mike Tyson, Aaron Pryor, Alexis Arguello, Roberto Duran, Marvin Hagler, Thomas Hearns, and many more. There's nothing new here for those familiar with this period of wonderful fights and fighters, but for new fans it provides a good primer that will hopefully whet the appetite for further reading. The book cost $8.00 and can be obtained at: robsteth.tripod.com



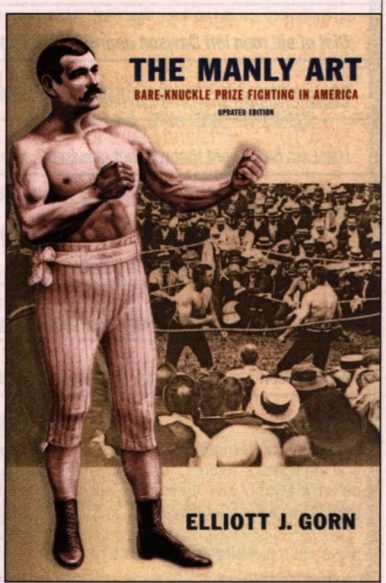
Patrick Myler's acclaimed biography, *Dan Donnelly: Pugilist, Publican, Playboy* (The Lilliput Press, 200 pages, paperback), which was originally published in 1976, is back in print. This is great news for lovers of the bare-knuckle era and top-notch writing.

Donnelly was an Irish folk hero in the early-19th century whose exploits inside and out of the ring still reverberate today. The site of his 1815 victory over Englishman George Cooper (now named Donnelly's Hollow in his honor) is home to a monument, and visitors can still see his footprints that were carved out by fans as Donnelly strode away from the battlefield.

Donnelly's lasting fame was enhanced by the fact that grave robbers stole his body, which led to his mummified right arm being on display in The Hideout pub in Kilkullen, County Kildare, for decades. In recent years, the arm was on tour as part of The Fighting Irishman exhibition.

Myler's book, however, is about much more than an old brawler and a grisly relic. To quote the *Sunday Independent* review, it's "not just another boxing book ... it is a social document."

Also back in print is Elliott J. Gorn's scholarly tome, *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Fighting In America* (Cornell University Press, 328 pages, paperback, $19.95). One comes away from this influential work with a far greater understanding of the relationship between boxing, culture, and American history. This updated version of the original 1986 edition is a must-read for any serious student of the prize ring.



—Nigel Collins

TV Fights of the Month

Compiled By Martin Mulcahey

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
7/30/10	Danny Garcia KO 9 Jorge Romero *Kayo hook, diverted mid-punch, lands on chin instead of body*	Telefutura	w	B-	C	B
7/30/10	Ashley Theophane W 10 Delvin Rodriguez *Unpopular decision finally goes Theophane's way*	ESPN2	w	C+	B-	C+
7/31/10	Jorge Arce KO 1 Martin Castillo *Three years ago this would have been on PPV and a minor upset*	FOX Sports	b	B-	B-	C+
7/31/10	Juan Rosas KO 6 Simphiwe Nongqayi *Thirty-seven-year-old titlist grows old overnight*	FOX Sports	jb	B+	B	B-
7/31/10	Jorge Linares W 10 Rocky Juarez *Rocky's road looks to be at a dead end*	PPV	l	B	B	C+
7/31/10	Robert Guerrero W 10 Joel Casamayor *Good friends fought like it*	PPV	jw	B	B-	C
7/31/10	Dmitry Pirog KO 4 Daniel Jacobs *The only boxer not promoted by Golden Boy steals the show*	PPV	m	B+	B	B+
7/31/10	**Juan Manuel Marquez W 12 Juan Diaz** ***Remind me again, which fighter was 11 years younger?***	**PPV**	**l**	**A**	**B-**	**B**
8/06/10	Christopher Martin W 10 Chris Avalos *Unsung Martin upsets touted Avalos*	Showtime	b	C+	B	C+
8/06/10	Antonio Escalante KO 3 Edel Ruiz *Escalante is a title threat in two weight classes*	Telefutura	f	C+	C+	B-
8/06/10	Breidis Prescott W 10 Harrison Cuello *Prescott gets TV dates as long as people remember Khan kayo*	ESPN2	jw	C+	D	C-
8/07/10	Tavoris Cloud W 12 Glen Johnson *Cloud packs more thunder than lightning*	HBO	lh	A-	A-	B+
8/07/10	Devon Alexander W 12 Andreas Kotelnik *Kotelnik looks better in loss than Alexander in victory*	HBO	jw	A-	B	B
8/13/10	Jesus Pabon KO 8 Ernesto Zepeda *Do just 16 fights for 30-year-old Pabon make him world's oldest prospect?*	Telemundo	w	C	C	C+
8/13/10	Carlos Molina KO 5 Glenn Gonzales *It was Molina who was speedy, not Gonzales*	Telefutura	jw	C+	C	C+
8/13/10	Eloy Perez KO 8 Derrick Campos *Slick boxer scores an unexpectedly aggressive kayo*	Telefutura	jl	C+	C+	C+
8/13/10	Chris Arreola W 12 Manuel Quezada *Quezada is the only thing on Arreola's plate he did not finish*	ESPN2	h	B	C+	C
8/14/10	Miguel Garcia KO 11 Cornelius Lock *If you can't pick a Lock, smash it!*	FOX Sports	f	B	B	B
8/14/10	Miguel Vazquez W 12 Ji Hoon Kim *Boxers who survive Kim's pressure beat him*	FOX Sports	l	B+	B+	C+
8/14/10	**Jean Pascal Tech. W 11 Chad Dawson** ***Diet of old men left Dawson unprepared for speedy Canadian***	**HBO**	**lh**	**A+**	**A+**	**B+**
8/18/10	Yordanis Despaigne W 10 Frank Paines *Cuban Olympian shows he can deal with cuts*	ESNP2	lh	C+	C-	C+
8/18/10	Erislandy Lara KO 1 Willie Lee *Has Lara had a fight that was not televised?*	ESNP2	jm	B-	C-	B-
8/20/10	Mercito Gesta KO 7 Genaro Trazancos *Mercito shows no mercy*	Telefutura	l	C+	C	C+
8/21/10	Sadam Ali KO 5 Lenin Arroyo *Is this a NYC prospect who finally delivers?*	PPV	w	C-	C	C
8/21/10	Joel Julio W 10 Jamaal Davis *Former can't-miss prospect struggles with average foe*	PPV	jm	B-	C	C+
8/21/10	Tomasz Adamek W 12 Michael Grant *No American heavyweight can equal Adamek at the box office*	PPV	h	B+	C	B-

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Jimmy Arthur, 1930-2010

Most members of the Philadelphia boxing fraternity knew Jimmy Arthur as one of the city's best, if unsung, trainers. But Arthur, who died on August 5 at the age of 80, was much more than that: He was a natural teacher who used his gift in numerous ways.

Born in Kinston, North Carolina, he began at an early age, training horses. Instead of conventional methods, Arthur would take the horses into the surf along the North Carolina seacoast, where they lost most of the strength in the water and were easier to handle. He also trained fighting chickens, developing exercises to build the birds' strength and endurance.

Moreover, his knack for training canines was uncanny. One day in the mid-1970s, a man stopped by the gym with an unruly German shepherd, looking for Arthur's help. The dog was totally out of control, but, within five minutes, Jimmy had the animal obeying his every command.

Arthur had a brief pro career (under the name of James Washington) in the 1950s before he began training boxers. His greatest success came in the 1970s, when he trained Tyrone Everett, a brilliant southpaw whose only loss was to then-WBC junior lightweight titleholder Alfredo Escalera in a 1976 title bout that is widely considered a fixed fight.

Over the years, Arthur worked with other top boxers, including Mike Rossman, Roger Russell, Kevin Howard, Frankie Mitchell, and Alfonso Hayman. But he also trained many obscure fighters, the sort used to build up prospects' records. Unlike many trainers who gave the designated losers short shrift, Arthur always tried to figure out a way the underdog could win or, at least, give a good account of himself.

"If it's an out-of-town fight, I always have the fighter invite a couple of his corner boys to ride with us," Arthur said. "That way they would fight harder because they didn't want to be embarrassed in front of their friends. They couldn't fall down and then go home and say they were robbed."

It is often the little things that reveal a man's true character. Most of the young men Arthur trained were from poverty-stricken backgrounds, and, one night at the Blue Horizon, a kid making his pro debut seemed more concerned about the hole in his sock than his opponent.

"Don't worry," said Arthur as he bent over and rearranged the sock so that the hole would not be as visible. "Nobody will see it."

We lost more than a superb trainer when Jimmy Arthur died. We lost a man who afforded a measure of dignity to even the least among his charges.

–Nigel Collins

Arthur with mid-1970s pupil Moses Robinson

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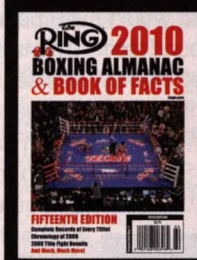

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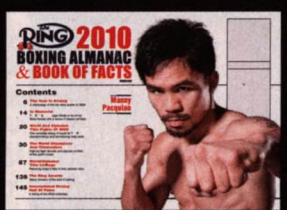

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Outside the Ropes

Former junior welterweight world champion **Kostya Tszyu** told **Andre Grimaux** of Australia's *Northern Times* that his 15-year-old son, **Tim Tszyu**, will turn professional rather than pursue a lengthy amateur career. "I'm going to mentor him and definitely manage him. He won't make the same mistakes as me," said the elder Tszyu, who last fought in 2005. "He's confident, powerful, and his decision making is good. I'm very pleased" ... Trainer **George Bordon** has opened a new gym in Tranent, Scotland, approximately 11 miles outside of Edinburgh. Unbeaten Scottish middleweight **Craig McEwan**, former WBO super featherweight titleholder **Alex Arthur**, and other local boxing dignitaries were on hand for the opening of the new "Bronx" gym ... **Mikkel Kessler** has withdrawn from Showtime's "Super Six" tournament because of an eye injury. The Danish boxer was scheduled to fight **Allan Green** on September 25 in what would have been his third fight of the super middleweight round robin. "This is the most disappointing moment of my boxing career," Kessler said. "After defeating **Carl Froch**, I was on the way to win the tournament, so pulling out now really hurts. The eye problem has bothered me since the beginning of the Super Six and in my preparation for the bout against **Andre Ward**. It also bothered me in the fights against Ward and Froch, and in my training for the fight against Green, it has become unbearable. I have consulted leading experts in Denmark and Germany, and they have advised me to take a break from boxing so that the problem can heal. I have been assured that it will heal completely and that I will be back in the ring next year. As a fair sportsman, I do not want to delay the Super Six, which is still the best thing that has happened to boxing for a long time. I wish my fellow contestants the best of luck—may the best man win. I will be there to fight the winner in 2011." **Christian Meyers**, managing director for Kessler's promoter, Team Sauerland, said: "The doctor confirmed that only proper rest—not so much treatment—simply rest from boxing activity would lead to a full recovery." Showtime Sports Executive Vice President **Ken Hershman** expresses his disappointment for Kessler but assures the boxing fans around the world that the tournament will go on. "We will publicly address how this turn of events affects the tournament in the coming days," said Hershman. "I assure you we will make the best of this scenario" ... Heavyweight contender **Nikolay Valuev**, 37, has undergone surgery on his left shoulder and right wrist. The Russian boxer, who last fought in November 2009, when he suffered his lone pro loss via majority decision to **David Haye**, could be sidelined for at least six months ... Police raided the home of **Manny Pacquiao**'s older sister, **Isidra Pacquiao-Paglinawa**, in General Santos City in late-July. Authorities claim Isidra was involved in running a "Last 2" numbers game, an illegal gambling scheme. Pacquiao's sister was not present during the raid, but 10 people suspected of operating the scheme were arrested. The police also seized gambling paraphernalia and 30,000 Philippine pesos. Isidra was later arrested, charged, and released on bail. "I will not take sides," said Manny, who arrived at his sister' residence while police were gathering evidence. "If she violated the law, then she must pay for it." Isidra's lawyer, **Giovanni Mata**, told the media that his client would file a complaint against the police for unlawful arrest, robbery, and arbitrary detention ... Trainer and cutman **Matt Baranski**, 88, died on July 29 in his Glenmont, New York, home. Baranski fought as an amateur before running the Trinity Gym in Albany for approximately 25 years. He was best known for working with **Mike Tyson**, along with **Cus D'Amato** and **Kevin Rooney**, during the early years of Tyson's pro career. His stint with Tyson ended when **Don King** became Tyson's promoter ... **Jay Larkin**, who spent 22 years working at Showtime, died of brain cancer on August 9. Larkin, who received a degree in theater and directing from C.W. Post College, ran Showtime's boxing department for more than a decade and was instrumental in making the **Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson** superfight in 2002, which at the time set a new record for pay-per-view revenue. Larkin won the Sam Taub Award for excellence in broadcasting from the Boxing Writers Association of America in 2005, the same year he lost his job at Showtime due to cutbacks at parent company Viacom.

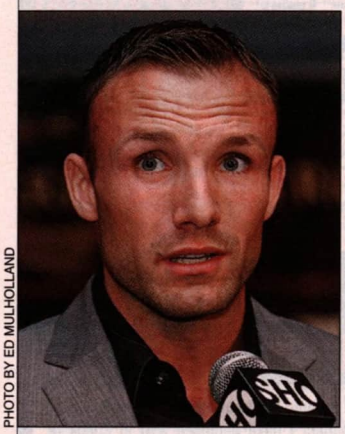


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Kessler: Withdraws from "Super Six"

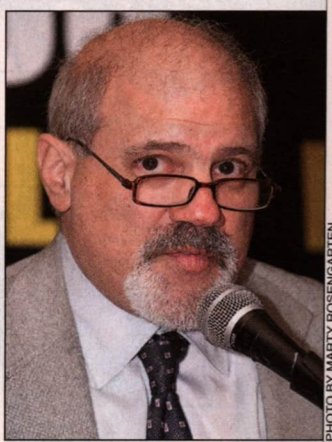


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Larkin: Cancer victim

Quotable

"They have picked the wrong opponent. I am no Brian Minto or Adam Richards. Huck has never been in the ring with somebody like me, and I will be doing things he has never seen before. I will bring home the title."

—Matt Godfrey, bragging to the media before suffering a fifth-round, three-knockdown TKO to WBO cruiserweight beltholder Marci Huck in Erfurt, Germany.

"I'll walk right through him. I mean, he's got a decent jab, but, when you take it to him, he gets away with headbutting and mauling. I'm not impressed."

—Carl Froch, speaking about "Super Six" rival Andre Ward in an interview published in the British weekly, Boxing News.

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended August 22, 2010

Heavyweights: No changes.
Cruiserweights: Marco Huck (third last issue) switches with Krzysztof Wlodarczyk (second last issue) based on Huck's fifth-round stoppage of Matt Godfrey (10th last issue) and greater activity. Godfrey exits, making way for Pawel Kolodziej to enter at 10.
Light Heavyweights: Jean Pascal (third last issue) takes over the champion's spot after winning the vacant RING world title via technical decision victory over Chad Dawson, who remains the number-one contender. Pascal's victory, coupled with Tavoris Cloud's close decision over Glen Johnson (second last issue), shuffles the division. Cloud goes from five to two, Johnson slips from two to three, and everyone rated six through 10 moves up one slot each, making room for Gabriel Campillo to enter at 10.
Super Middleweights: Andre Dirrell (sixth last issue) switches with Sakio Bika (fifth last issue) due to Bika's disqualification loss to Jean Paul Mendy.
Middleweights: Khoren Gevor (fifth last issue) departs after moving to super middleweight, enabling everyone rated five through 10 to move up one slot each. Gevor's exit also creates room for Dmitry Pirog to debut at 10, after his stunning knockout of Daniel Jacobs.
Junior Middleweights: Cornelius Bundrage enters at 10 after stopping Cory Spinks to win an alphabet title. Saul Alvarez (10th last issue) departs to make room for Bundrage.
Welterweights: No changes.
Junior Welterweights: Devon Alexander (second last issue) drops to three, giving way to Amir Khan (third last issue) who grabbed the number-two spot. Alexander's demotion is based on his controversial showing against Andreas Kotelnik (seventh last issue), who rises to five. Kotelnik's ascension drops Juan Urango (fifth last issue) and Kaizer Mabuza (sixth last issue) one place each each. Mike Alvarado (ninth last issue) departs because he is incarcerated, which allows Lamont Peterson (10th last issue) to move up one slot and makes room for Paul McCloskey to debut at 10.
Lightweights: Miguel Vazquez replaces Brandon Rios (10th last issue) thanks to his decision victory over Ji Hoon Kim for a vacant title belt.
Junior Lightweights: No changes.
Featherweights: No changes.
Junior Featherweights: No changes.
Bantamweights: No changes.
Junior Bantamweights: Siphiwe Nongqayi (third last issue) and Alexander Munoz (fifth last issue) exit. Nongqayi was knocked out by Juan Alberto Rosa, who debuts at nine. Munoz departs because he has not fought at 115 pounds since losing a May 2008 bout to Cristian Mijares. The shakeup allows Nobuo Nashiro (fourth last issue) to advance to three and everyone rated six through to 10 advances two places each. Malik Bouziane is new at No. 10.
Flyweights: No changes.
Junior Flyweights: No changes.
Strawweights: No changes.
Pound-for-Pound: Chad Dawson (sixth last issue) exits, as he didn't fight like a true pound-for-pounder losing to Jean Pascal. Dawson's departure enabled everyone rated from seven to 10 last issue to climb one rung each and made room for RING heavyweight world champion Wladimir Klitschko, who has not lost since 2004, to enter at 10.

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Manny Pacquiao** Welterweight
2. **Floyd Mayweather** Welterweight
3. **Juan Manuel Marquez** Lightweight
4. **Nonito Donaire** Junior Bantamweight
5. **Shane Mosley** Welterweight
6. **Paul Williams** Middleweight
7. **Sergio Martinez** Junior Middle/Middleweight
8. **Pongsaklek Wonjongkam** Flyweight
9. **Fernando Montiel** Bantamweight
10. **Wladimir Klitschko** Heavyweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **ringtv.com**

The Ring Ratings

For Period Ended August 22, 2010

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

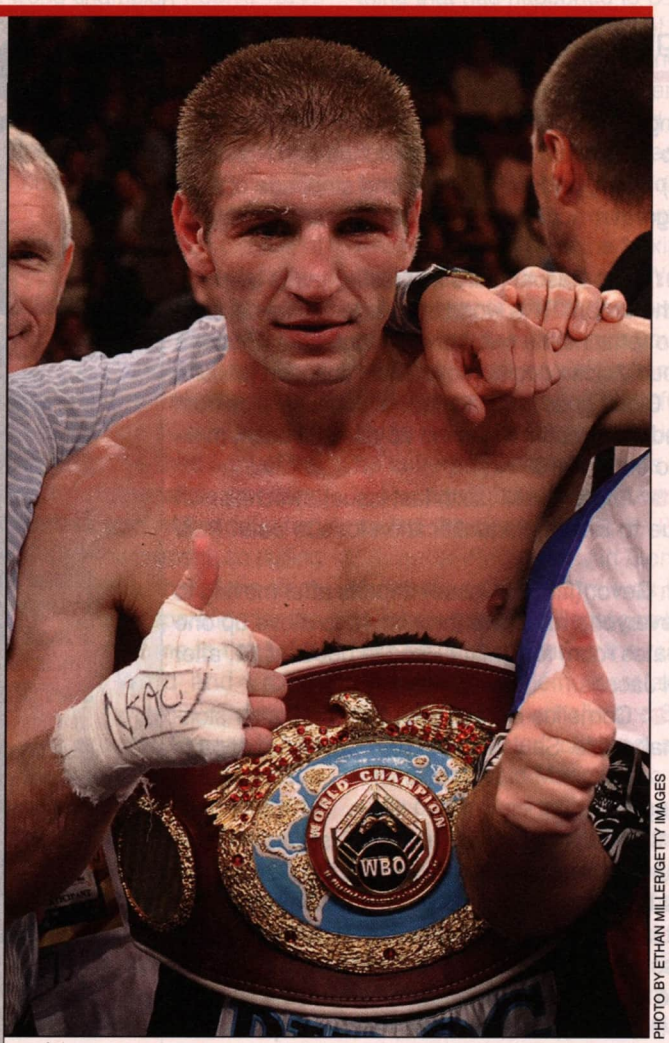


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Dmitry Pirog debuts in the middleweight ratings at number 10 after smashing Daniel Jacobs

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 54-3 (48)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 40-2 (38)
2. **DAVID HAYE**
England 24-1 (22)
3. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia 19-0 (14)
4. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 42-1 (27)
5. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan 26-1-1 (17)
6. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
Philadelphia, PA 35-2 (18)
7. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia 27-0 (22)
8. **NICOLAY VALUEV**
Russia 50-2 (34)
9. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine 30-1 (20)
10. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
Riverside, CA 29-2 (25)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina 45-2-2 (24)
2. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 32-3-1 (28)
3. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
Mexico 19-1 (16)
4. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 35-2 (28)
5. **RYAN RHODES**
England 44-4 (30)
6. **SECHEW POWELL**
Brooklyn, NY 26-2 (15)
7. **YURI FOREMAN**
Belarus 28-1 (8)
8. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
Armenia 28-0 (17)
9. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
Ukraine 37-0 (23)
10. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
Detroit, MI 30-4 (18)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia 43-0-2 (22)
2. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico 29-0 (26)
3. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
Mexico 34-10-2 (22)
4. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ**
Mexico 39-12-2 (23)
5. **STEVEN LUEVANO**
La Puente, CA 37-2-1 (15)
6. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
Cuba 18-0 (15)
7. **ELIO ROJAS**
Dominican Republic 22-1 (13)
8. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
Mexico 39-2 (32)
9. **BERNABE CONCEPCION**
Philippines 28-4-1 (15)
10. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 39-5 (35)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM**
Thailand 41-1 (29)
2. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 36-4-3 (23)
3. **STEVE MOLITOR**
Canada 32-1 (12)
4. **RICARDO CORDOBA**
Panama 37-2-2 (23)
5. **JEFF MATHEBULA**
South Africa 23-2-2 (13)
6. **RENDALL MUNROE**
England 21-1 (9)
7. **SATOSHI HOSONO**
Japan 16-1 (12)
8. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
Puerto Rico 19-0-1 (16)
9. **MASAAKI SERIE**
Japan 15-4 (6)
10. **AKIFUMI SHIMODA**
Japan 21-2-1 (10)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 42-3-1 (32)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO**
Panama 30-1-1 (10)
3. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
Japan 28-3 (12)
4. **YONNHY PEREZ**
Colombia 20-0-1 (14)
5. **ABNER MARES**
Mexico 20-0-1 (13)
6. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
Ghana 27-2 (22)
7. **NEHOMAR CERMENO**
Venezuela 19-2 (11)
8. **SASHA BAKHTIN**
Russia 25-0 (11)
9. **ERIC MOREL**
Madison, WI 42-2 (21)
10. **MICHAEL DOMINGO**
Philippines 40-14-2 (18)

Cruiserweights

Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM** Philadelphia, PA 23-2 (12)
2. **MARCO HUCK** Yugoslavia 30-1 (23)
3. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK** Poland 42-2-1 (32)
4. **TROY ROSS** Canada 23-2 (16)
5. **ZSOLT ERDEI** Hungary 31-0 (17)
6. **DENIS LEBEDEV** Russia 21-0 (16)
7. **DANNY GREEN** Australia 30-3 (27)
8. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI** Italy 26-3-1 (10)
9. **OLA AFOLABI** England 14-2-3 (6)
10. **PAWEL KOLODZIEJ** Poland 26-0 (15)

Light Heavyweights

Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: JEAN PASCAL Haiti 26-1 (16)

1. **CHAD DAWSON** New Haven, CT 29-1 (17)
2. **TAVORIS CLOUD** Tallahassee, FL 21-0 (18)
3. **GLEN JOHNSON** Jamaica 50-14-2 (34)
4. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Philadelphia, PA 51-5-1 (32)
5. **ADRIAN DIACONU** Romania 26-2 (15)
6. **KARO MURAT** Iraq 21-0 (13)
7. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV** Kazakhstan 10-1 (6)
8. **NATHAN CLEVERLY** Wales 19-0 (9)
9. **CHRIS HENRY** Houston, TX 25-2 (20)
10. **GABRIEL CAMPILLO** Spain 20-3 (7)

Super Middleweights

Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **LUCIAN BUTE** Romania 26-0 (21)
2. **ANDRE WARD** Oakland, CA 22-0 (13)
3. **MIKKEL KESSLER** Denmark 43-2 (32)
4. **CARL FROCH** England 26-1 (21)
5. **ANDRE DIRRELL** Flint, MI 19-1 (13)
6. **SAKIO BIKA** Cameroon 28-4-2 (19)
7. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM** Armenia 31-1 (25)
8. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ** Germany 38-2 (23)
9. **LIBRADO ANDRADE** Mexico 29-3 (22)
10. **BRIAN MAGEE** Northern Ireland 33-3-1 (23)

Middleweights

Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: SERGIO MARTINEZ Argentina 45-2-2 (24)

1. **FELIX STURM** Germany 33-2-1 (14)
2. **PAUL WILLIAMS** Augusta, GA 39-1 (27)
3. **KELLY PAVLIK** Youngstown, OH 36-2 (32)
4. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER** Germany 33-3-1 (16)
5. **MATTHEW MACKLIN** England 26-2 (18)
6. **ANTHONY MUNDINE** Australia 39-3 (23)
7. **DANIEL GEALE** Australia 22-1 (13)
8. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK** Germany 30-0 (10)
9. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia 40-3-2 (26)
10. **DMITRY PIROG** Russia 17-0 (14)

Welterweights

Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** Grand Rapids, MI 41-0 (25)
2. **MANNY PACQUIAO** Philippines 51-3-2 (38)
3. **ANDRE BERTO** Winter Haven, FL 26-0 (20)
4. **SHANE MOSLEY** Pomona, CA 46-6 (39)
5. **MIGUEL COTTO** Puerto Rico 35-2 (28)
6. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY** Ghana 35-4 (20)
7. **RAFAL JACKIEWICZ** Poland 36-8-1 (18)
8. **JAN ZAVECK** Slovenia 29-1 (17)
9. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO** Ukraine 30-0 (20)
10. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY** Palm Springs, CA 26-0 (11)

Jr. Welterweights

Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY** Palm Springs, CA 26-0 (11)
2. **AMIR KHAN** England 23-1 (17)
3. **DEVON ALEXANDER** St. Louis, MO 21-0 (13)
4. **MARCOS MAIDANA** Argentina 28-1 (27)
5. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK** Ukraine 31-4-1 (13)
6. **JUAN URANGO** Colombia 22-3-1 (17)
7. **KAIZER MABUZA** South Africa 23-6-3 (14)
8. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI** Brooklyn, NY 27-4 (5)
9. **LAMONT PETERSON** Washington, D.C. 28-1 (14)
10. **PAUL MCCLOSKEY** England 21-0 (11)

Lightweights

Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ Mexico 51-5-1 (37)

1. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS** Australia 27-2 (22)
2. **ALI FUNEKA** South Africa 30-3-3 (25)
3. **MIGUEL ACOSTA** Venezuela 27-9-2 (21)
4. **HUMBERTO SOTO** Mexico 52-7-2 (32)
5. **ANTHONY PETERSON** Washington, DC 30-0 (19)
6. **PAULUS MOSES** Namibia 25-1 (17)
7. **JOHN MURRAY** England 29-0 (17)
8. **ROBERT GUERRERO** Gilroy, CA 27-1-1 (18)
9. **URBANO ANTILLON** Mexico 28-1 (20)
10. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ** Mexico 26-3 (12)

Jr. Lightweights

Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MZONKE FANA** South Africa 29-4 (12)
2. **ROMAN MARTINEZ** Puerto Rico 24-0-1 (15)
3. **MALCOLM KLASSEN** South Africa 24-5-2 (15)
4. **CASSIUS BALOYI** South Africa 37-4-1 (19)
5. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA** Japan 15-0 (12)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO** Mexico 22-1-1 (16)
7. **JORGE SOLIS** Mexico 39-2-2 (28)
8. **JORGE LINARES** Venezuela 29-1 (18)
9. **VITALI TAJBERT** Kazakhstan 20-1 (6)
10. **ARGENIS MENDEZ** Dominican Republic 17-1 (9)

Jr. Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VIC DARCHINYAN** Armenia 35-2-1 (27)
2. **HUGO CAZARES** Mexico 32-6-2 (23)
3. **NOBUO NASHIRO** Japan 13-2-1 (8)
4. **NONITO DONAIRE** Philippines 24-1 (16)
5. **KOHEI KONO** Japan 25-4 (9)
6. **DAIGO NAKAHIRO** Japan 21-2-1 (8)
7. **DRIAN FRANCISCO** Philippines 19-0-1 (15)
8. **OMAR NARVAEZ** Argentina 32-0-2 (19)
9. **JUAN ALBERTO ROSAS** Mexico 32-5 (26)
10. **MALIK BOUZIANE** France 13-1-1 (1)

Flyweights

Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM Thailand 76-3-1 (40)

1. **KOKI KAMEDA** Japan 23-1 (15)
2. **DAISUKE NAITO** Japan 36-3-3 (23)
3. **DAIKI KAMEDA** Japan 17-2 (11)
4. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT** Thailand 50-2-1 (20)
5. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA** Japan 36-5-2 (17)
6. **LUIS CONCEPCION** Panama 21-1 (16)
7. **MORUTI MTHALANE** South Africa 25-2 (16)
8. **ZOLANI TETE** South Africa 12-0 (11)
9. **CESAR SEDA** Puerto Rico 18-0 (14)
10. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA** Mexico 32-5-1 (25)

Jr. Flyweights

Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: IVAN CALDERON Puerto Rico 34-0-1 (6)

1. **GIOVANNI SEGURA** Mexico 24-1-1 (20)
2. **OMAR NINO** Mexico 29-3-2 (11)
3. **RODEL MAYOL** Philippines 26-5-2 (20)
4. **EDGAR SOSA** Mexico 39-6 (23)
5. **LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE** Argentina 47-9-1 (18)
6. **CARLOS TAMARA** Colombia 21-5 (15)
7. **BRIAN VILORIA** Waipahu, HI 27-3 (15)
8. **ULISES SOLIS** Mexico 31-2-2 (21)
9. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO** Argentina 25-1 (15)
10. **RAMON HIRALES** Mexico 13-1-1 (8)

Strawweights

Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ** Nicaragua 25-0 (21)
2. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI** Thailand 34-0 (12)
3. **NKOSINATHI JOYI** South Africa 21-0 (15)
4. **RAUL GARCIA** Mexico 27-1-1 (16)
5. **DONNIE NIETES** Philippines 27-1-3 (15)
6. **FLORANTE CONDES** Philippines 23-5-1 (20)
7. **JUAN PALACIOS** Nicaragua 26-3 (21)
8. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN** Indonesia 62-8-5 (31)
9. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA** Japan 23-4 (9)
10. **YASUTAKA KUROKI** Japan 23-4-1 (15)

By Jeff Ryan

Ghost Writer

Halloween is fast approaching, which means that I've got to start dealing with my fear again. Not the fear of witches riding broomsticks that can go from zero to 60 in four seconds, goblins lurking in my cobweb-covered attic, black cats, broken mirrors, Vincent Price, or a spooky fog that's thicker than Penelope Cruz' accent. No, I'm talking about *real* fear. That's the fear of running out of candy corn and mini Snickers bars and having some peeved delinquent in a Spider-Man costume egg my front door, do the Monster Mash on my wife's impatiens, and empty a can of Barbasol into my mailbox.

Grizzled boxing trainers like to tell us that fear is actually a good thing because it keeps a person focused and prevents complacency. In that case, I'm in a zone. And it's not just because of those urchins ringing my doorbell. There are actually a number of things that have me doing the phobic aerobics these days. For fear of boring you (see there's another fear right there), let me concentrate just on the ones related to the fight game.

Don't let my icy cool demeanor fool you. I'm plenty scared that …

• **A Floyd Mayweather-Manny Pacquiao bout will never materialize:** Sure, it can still unfold in 2011, and probably will. But didn't we say that about 2010?

In my 27 years on the beat, I can't recall a time when the best matchup the sport had to offer was being seriously negotiated yet failed to eventually materialize. These kinds of events *always* come off. But Mayweather walking away from a reported purse offer of $60-million is making me think that, for whatever reason, he doesn't want the challenge. He will be 34 in February; Pacquiao 32 in December. The longer they wait, the better chance their skills will slip a bit. That may not take the luster off their showdown, but it just might diminish some of its historical significance.

And let's not even say the word, u-p-s-e-t, out loud. If you don't think it can happen to Pacquiao, who cuts and has the mileage of 56 bouts on his tires, or Mayweather, who lets too many opponents hang around for the full 12 rounds, just ask Chad Dawson if he ever thought he'd lose to Jean Pascal.

• **"Money" vs. "Pac-Man" will turn into a stinker:** A bigger fear than Mayweather-Pacquiao never talking place is having the next "Fight of the Century" turn into the *Flight* of the Century. "Pretty Boy" wants to stay pretty, so it's difficult to imagine him not turning the action into the I-Earn Man Duathlon by alternately hopping on his bicycle and running toward the finish line. How do you feel about paying what reportedly could be a record $75 to watch *that* on pay-per-view?

• **Evander Holyfield will continue to win:** "The Surreal Deal" is scheduled to face journeyman Sherman Williams in November in Detroit. Geez, that matchup ought to do as much for "Motown's" reputation as Devil's Night, when some of the local hell raisers traditionally light abandoned houses on fire.

Holyfield didn't exactly burn down the house when he halted Frans Botha in April, but it was the Holy Man's first kayo win in three years. And if there's one thing worse than another Holyfield defeat these days, it's a Holyfield victory. Because that encourages him to keep going. If the Atlantan marches through Sherman, a career already in its 27th year continues. Do you realize that Ronald Reagan was the president when Holyfield turned pro? It only seems like it was FDR.

• **The IBHOF will cheapen itself:** We've already got undeserving inductees like Barry McGuigan and Billy Soose. Will we

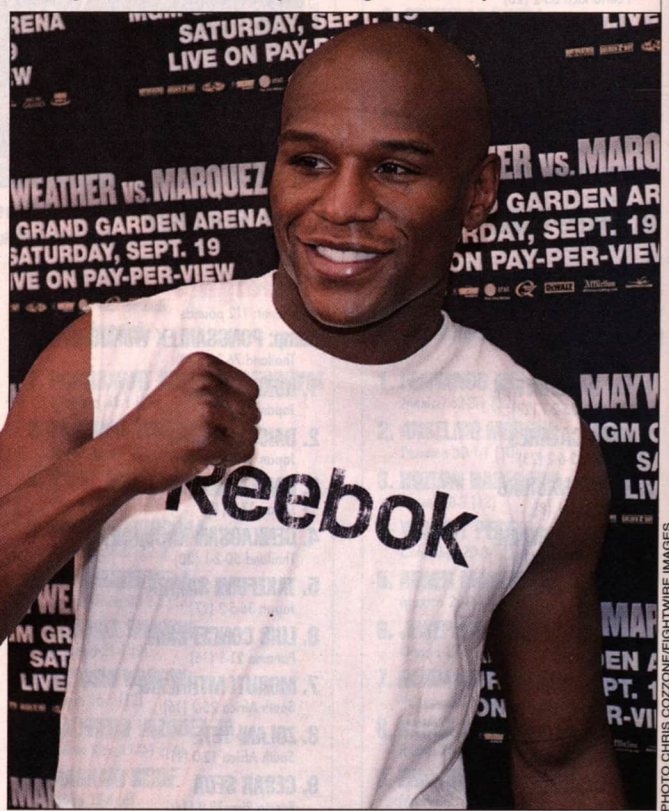


PHOTO CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

What if Mayweather never fights Pacquiao?

see a day when the Ray Mancinis and Marlon Starlings are considered ring immortals?

• **Larry Merchant will retire:** The HBO analyst's contract runs out in May, at which time he'll be 80 years old. Considering that the cable giant thought Merchant ancient and tried to shove him out the door as far back as 2007, it's not likely that he'll be retained.

And that's simply criminal. He remains a treat for viewers and is one of the few remaining analysts who brings a journalistic background to the job and paints word pictures a Max Kellerman or Teddy Atlas couldn't if you gave them a dictionary *and* a brush and canvas. Jack Whitaker is retired. Vin Scully may walk away next year. Bud Collins, canned by NBC, works in a greatly reduced role for ESPN. And Merchant's workdays are numbered. That special breed of wordsmith is soon to be extinct.

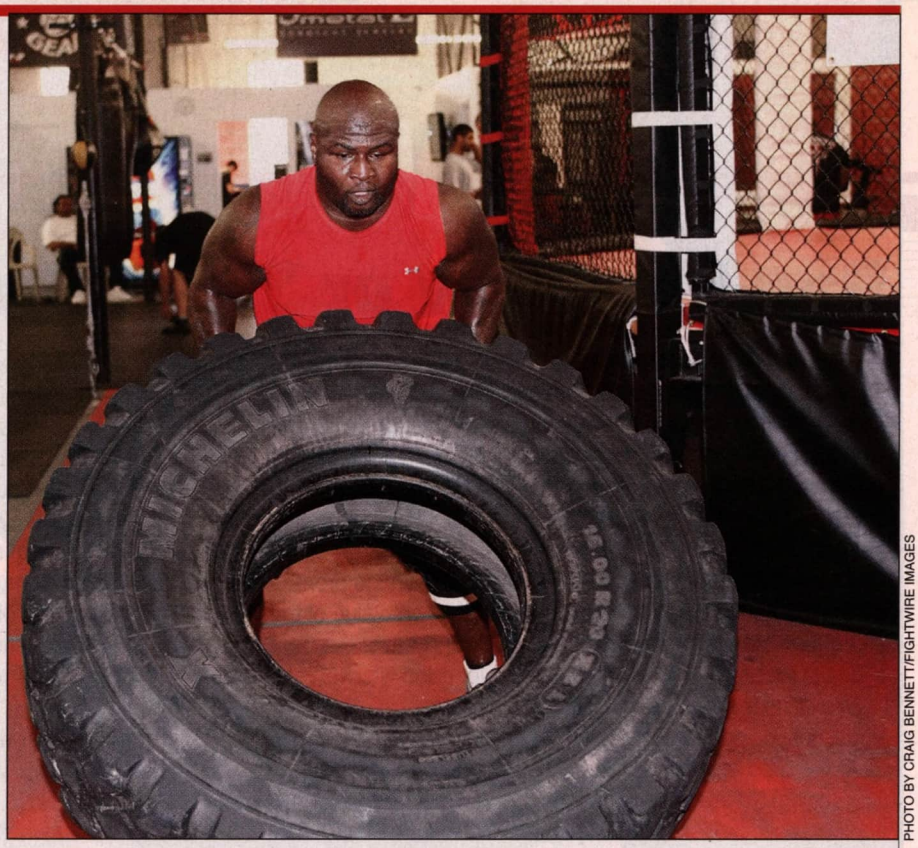


PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Is 49-year-old Toney the best boxing can offer MMA?

• **The Blue Horizon will stay shuttered for good this time:** The venerable fight club on Philadelphia's North Broad Street was closed in June after failing to pay taxes for years. The best small boxing venue in the world has already risen from the dead more times than Michael Myers in the *Halloween* sequels. Here's hoping that it hasn't used up the last of its nine lives.

• **Cheating will result in a ring death:** We can tell steroid jokes about James Toney and Shane Mosley, and I've been as guilty as anyone of using bad puns to describe Antonio Margarito's illegal handwraps, but as the elementary school teachers used to say, it's funny until somebody loses an eye. (Or, worse, a *life*.)

It's scary to think of the damage plaster-filled handwraps could do if repeatedly crashing into a fighter's temple. Or how a juicer, with the extra stamina steroids might provide, could hurt an exhausted rival in the late rounds. I've thought about that a lot. When you see a warrior genuflecting in his corner before the opening bell or thanking his "lord and savior" after surviving the action, you know that he's thought about it too.

• **Yankee Stadium won't get another chance:** The big ballpark created a wonderful atmosphere for the Miguel Cotto-Yuri Foreman shootout in June, but the attendance was a disappointing 20,272. (A crowd that could have actually fit inside many *indoor* venues.) Taking into account the low turnout and the cost of doing business in New York, my fear is that we won't see the Sweet Science experimenting in that Bronx laboratory again until Derek Jeter Jr. is playing shortstop for the Pinstripes.

• **Boxing will keep sending its "B" team to MMA events:** A 41-year-old Toney and 49-year-old Ray Mercer aren't true tests of how boxing's best would fare against the premier mixed martial artists. Let's see one of the karate kids try to absorb a Wladimir Klitschko right cross or attempt to catch Mayweather and execute a takedown without getting whacked in the mug first.

• **A fan will do something truly stupid:** Far dumber than paying $35 for a souvenir T-shirt or $9.00 for an arena beer. I'm talking about something along the lines of Fan Man, but with a far uglier outcome.

Not to give the nut cases out there any ideas, but ringside security at most arenas consists of a) nothing, b) a few rent-a-cops, or c) a police officer or two. Will we one day see a crazy man storm the ring in an attempt to harm a fighter or the referee? Is the day coming when a group of fans intervenes during the action and actually affects the outcome of a contest? Something like that is already overdue to happen.

• **Permanent writer's block will afflict yours truly:** A fellow journalist and I once discussed how it's the fear of every writer that there are only so many pitches left in the arm. That one day the ideas will stop coming. Or it will be harder to turn a phrase than it is for a 40-year-old second baseman to turn the double play. Or concentrating will become more of a challenge. It has already happened to plenty of old-time scribes out there, yet they're too stubborn to sign off for good. Here's hoping that I'm more Rocky Marciano than Evander Holyfield when it comes to retiring the keyboard. ■

By Ivan Goldman

Pay-Per-View or Three-Card Monte?

Why is it that pay-per-view shows are so damn disappointing? It's not that they're worse than other shows. It's just that too often they're not any better. When it's all over, sometimes I'm still staring at the screen hoping it might magically yield more entertainment value. The feeling is worse than standard buyer remorse. It's more like losing the rent in three-card monte.

The pay-per-view dynamic has more to do with the promoters maximizing profits than with the entertainment value of the fights themselves. Sometimes, like the song says, the best things in life are free. Except, of course, for good whiskey.

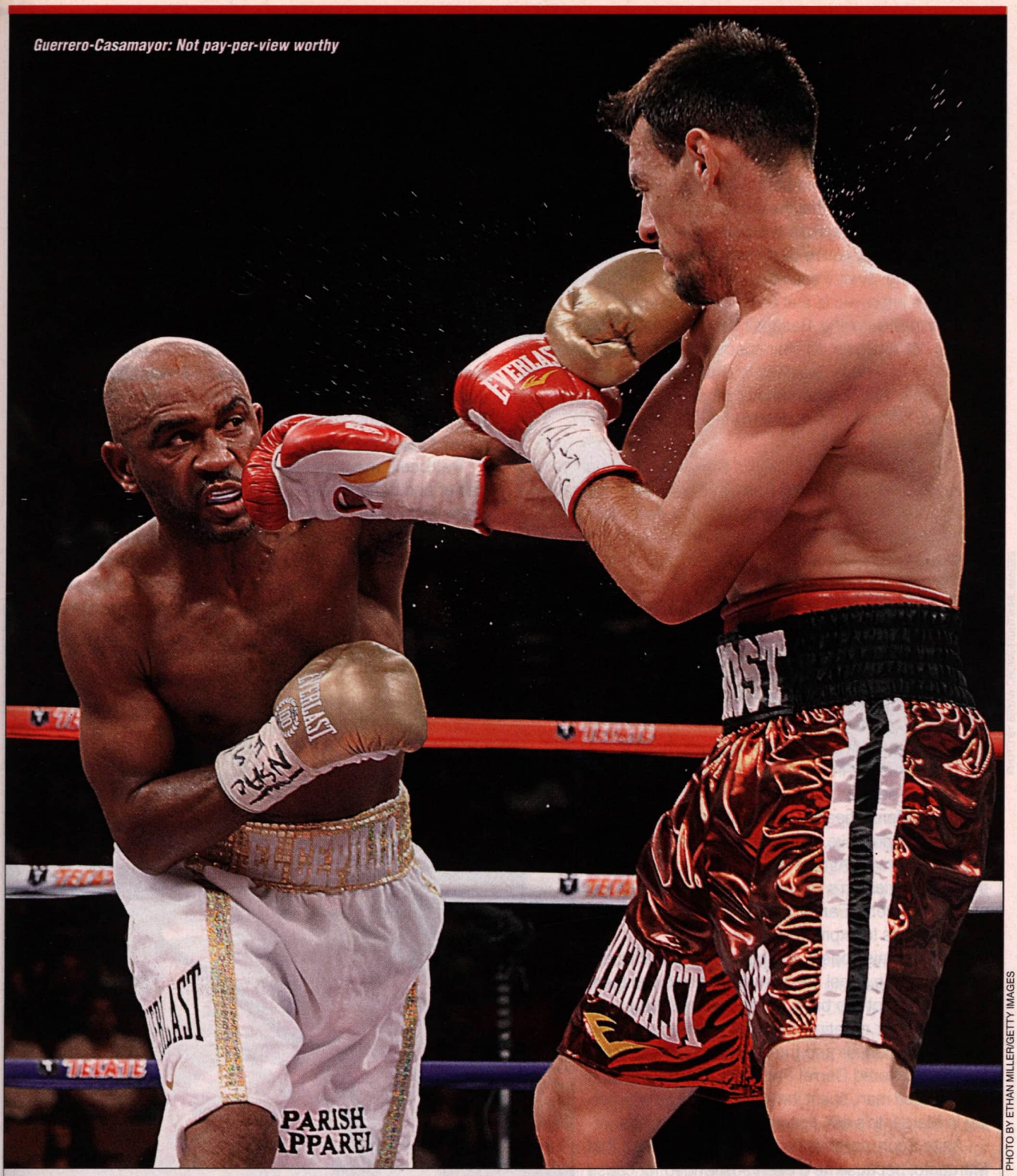
We all understand the problem. You don't want to miss good fights, but you don't want to get taken either. So it can get tricky. Take the card headed by the Juan Manuel Marquez rematch with Juan Diaz. It offered a promising undercard, something we don't often see these days. But as it turned out, the co-feature between Robert Guerrero and Joel Casamayor lacked drama, mostly because Guerrero, unlike the late Diego Corrales, refused to disregard the bouncing, butting head of Casamayor and fought a relatively cautious fight.

The main event was exactly the decent but not thrilling battle most of us expected, except that this time Diaz tried a different losing strategy. You can't fault the fighters, who both got pretty banged up in their pursuit of victory. The biggest thrills often come from surprises, and supplying one for sure was Dimitry Pirog, an obscure middleweight out of some miserable little place in Russia who fights like a clever American and dispatched highly regarded Daniel Jacobs with one timely, well-placed shot.

Compare the Marquez-Diaz card to what HBO gave to its subscribers the next week without any pay-per-screwing. Everybody complained that Tavoris Cloud-Glen Johnson was a meaningless matchup that had no business happening, yet it turned out to be a spirited, back-and-forth, close contest, one

Cloud-Johnson: Good fight minus pay-per-view fee

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES



Guerrero-Casamayor: Not pay-per-view worthy

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

of the best of the year. There were no clinches until round four, and not many after that. And nobody ran.

Quote of the month came from trainer Al Bonani, who, describing Johnson to Cloud before the eighth round, said, "He's dead. Believe me when I tell you he's dead. You're alive. Let's go." The aged Johnson, despite Bonani's assessment, had plenty left, though predictably the man from Jamaica lost what should have been scored as a close fight to the up-and-coming Don King fighter—by a wide margin. Cloud would do better if he'd stop dropping his left. Don't emulate Muhammad Ali unless you're another Ali, and no one is.

Meanwhile the main event, Devon Alexander-Andreas Kotelnik, was average entertainment that could easily be compared to Guerrero-Casamayor on the excite-o-meter, though

it featured no knockdowns. In retrospect, if you could only watch one of the two cards, which would you choose? I'd have to go with Alexander-Kotelnik so as not to miss the Cloud-Johnson war.

Pay-per-views used to provide the big fights you had to see. Then Bob Arum started putting together niche PPV cards aimed at Hispanics. And before long, other promoters tried it with all sorts of cards that the big networks refused to buy. Now pay-per-views fall across a broad spectrum. When you buy them, sometimes you're delighted. Sometimes you wish you'd gone bowling, even if you don't particularly like to bowl.

What's improved is that boxing fans no longer have to feel alone in their suffering. Baseball, football, basketball, and cage fighting, for example, all offer special dish/cable packages and pay-per-view events designed to extract money from their loyalists. Let's face it, when lots of other people feel lousy and betrayed, being a chump doesn't feel quite so bad.

Margarito Musings: News stories about the California hearing that denied Antonio Margarito a new license failed to tell us how confused, sad, and downright pitiful he looked, especially as he told commissioners how many people he supports back home—his family, his parents, and his wife's parents among them.

He looked to be carrying 180 pounds. If Manny Pacquiao really fights this guy on November 13, the difference in size will be startling, much greater than it was in Floyd Mayweather vs. Juan Manuel Marquez. I expect promoter Bob Arum, apparently obsessed with getting his way on this, will find a way to stage the fight somewhere. All he has to do is find a place that's more interested in money than sportsmanship or safety.

The California hearing was in an auditorium, probably once impressive, that now had water stains running down a wall. Almost the first thing out of Chairman John Frierson's mouth was his decision to bar public comment. Earlier he'd told me I could have three minutes to express my views.

The commissioners are public-spirited citizens who got on the panel because someone owed them a favor, but not too big a favor because the pay is only $100 per meeting. Margarito's entourage included a translator and three lawyers, one of them the high-powered Daniel Petrocelli. The translator, a middle-aged man, spent the entire 5½ hours whispering in Margarito's ear. I could think of better jobs.

Anita Scuri, commission counsel, explained that Margarito, because he'd been suspended for cause back in March 2009, was no ordinary applicant. He had to show change of mind, heart, and conduct, must accept responsibility, and show remorse. A tall order because he insisted he was as shocked as anybody else that plaster of Paris was found in both his handwraps before he went out to be stopped by Shane Mosley in January 2009.

"The integrity of boxing and the boxing commission is front and center," said prosecutor Karen Chappelle of the state Attorney General's Office.

Margarito's team conceded the wraps were adulterated but claimed he was a victim who knew nothing about it. This strategy had already failed when Margarito appealed the original suspension in state court. In fact, the court said it was "convinced that [Margarito] knew very well" what was in his wraps. Now Margarito claimed he was glad that the awful skullduggery was discovered because it may have prevented tragedy. If you believe that, I have a nice water-stained auditorium to sell you.

How, Petrocelli asked, can his client be contrite about loads he didn't know existed? As he spoke, the sound system started thumping. Honest. It sounded like a chopper landing in the next room. They asked him to pause while they checked out the audio gadgets. Was this some kind of truth meter in the sky making an independent ruling on the veracity of Margarito's case? I leave the answer to theologians.

Petrocelli emphasized that Margarito had cut all ties to trainer and hand-wrapper Javier Capetillo, now trains with ex-junior lightweight champ Robert Garcia, and had "turned down millions of dollars" to obey the suspension by refusing to fight until the year was up. If it was so important to him to clear his name, asked Commissioner Steve Alexander, why did

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Margarito: Denied license by California commission

Margarito apply to Texas and Nevada for licenses first? We never got a clear answer. But it's no secret that Nevada had strongly suggested Margarito take his case back to the commission that suspended him.

Commissioner DeWayne Zinkin said if they let Margarito off for this, "I'm worried about the next fighter in the next fight." It sends, he concluded, the wrong signal.

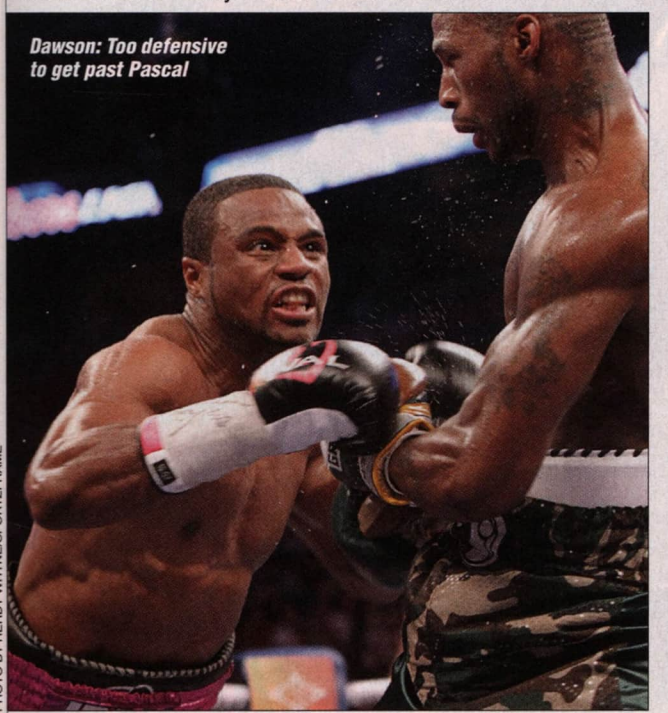
These are "major safety issues," concluded Commissioner Van Lemons. "If we make a mistake, I hope we make one on the side of safety."

You know the rest. Frierson voted for reinstatement, and Alexander, Zinkin, Lemons, Christopher Giza, and Eugene Hernandez sent Margarito packing. They encouraged him to try again next year.

Why not? California has fielded dozens of parole requests from Sirhan Sirhan. In fact, the day we parole Robert Kennedy's killer would be the perfect day to license Antonio Margarito. At least, that's what I'd planned to tell the commission, but they didn't need my advice. They did fine without it.

Futch: To referee Joe Cortez, who rightfully disqualified Sakio Bika for slamming a fist into the head of downed Jean Paul Mendy in their super middleweight match. With Mendy on his knees, Bika started to throw a punch, stopped himself, then wound up and threw it anyway. Too blatant to ignore.

Magoo One: Montreal should teach Chad Dawson once and for all that he can't afford to play it safe on the road. Otherwise, he might run into another judge like Jack Woodburn, who had it for home team Jean Pascal by a shockingly one-sided 108-101. Pascal did, in fact, deserve his 11th-round technical decision though. John Keane and Gerald Ritter were much closer to reality with their scores of 106-103.



Dawson: Too defensive to get past Pascal

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

PHOTO BY BRYAN CROWE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Arreola: Will he ever get it together?

Magoo Two: To Felipe Avalos, father and trainer of Chris Avalos. The *ShoBox* audio picked up shockingly mediocre instructions from the elder Avalos, as Chris Martin boxed rings around his son. Typical strategic analysis from Dad was, "Come on, you're losing. Get going."

Magoo Three: To judge John Mariano, who had it for the wrong fighter, Avalos, by the disgraceful score of 98-94. Thankfully Robert Hecko and Danny Nelson, who scored it for Martin 98-92 and 97-93 respectively, giving him the victory he'd earned by fighting a determined, smarter fight, overruled Mariano.

Magoo four: To Chris Arreola, who apparently still can't make it past a convenience store without stopping for Oreos and a giant Slurpee. Against Manuel Quezada, he weighed in at 256, 5½ pounds north of his last outing. Is this man headed for Butterbean territory? He needs to train in a faraway camp with a nutritionist-cook and no car keys. That wouldn't come cheap, but he should look upon it as an investment in his future. ■

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[Camera Clicks]

Notice a resemblance? Geez, if you put a tattoo on the left side of that kid's face, you wouldn't be able to tell which one was Mike Tyson. "Iron Mike" brought his daughter, Milan, to Mandalay Bay for the Marquez-Diaz bout, as the calmer, gentler Tyson showed he isn't above bringing a two-year old out for a night on the town and some ringside violence.

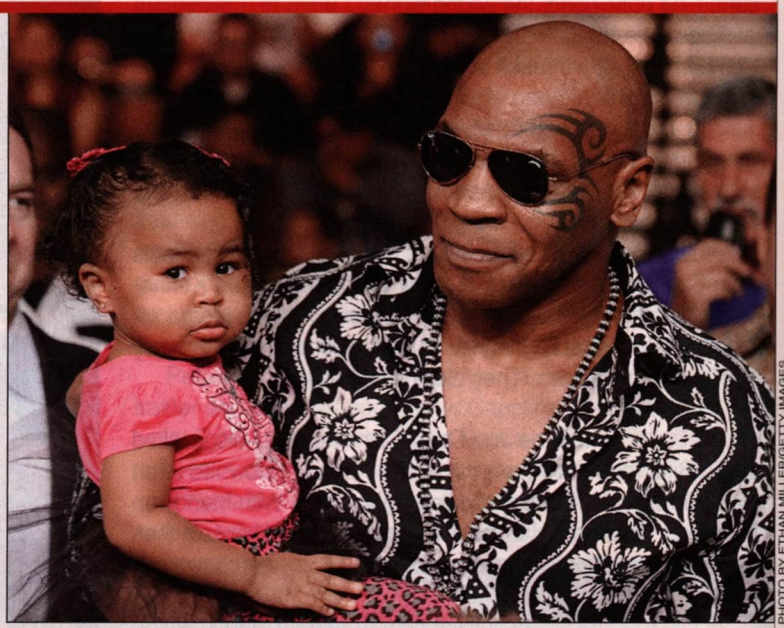

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

The younger fighter, Juan Diaz, learns the hard way what the wise old veteran, Juan Manuel Marquez, already knows: that the middle of a fight is no time to offer a referee a piggy-back ride. As the bell rang to end the 12th round of their July 31 rematch, ref Vic Drakulich grabbed Diaz to prevent any further punches from being thrown, but it had the unintended effect of preventing any further punches from being blocked, allowing Marquez to land this grazing left while Drakulich held Diaz in place. Diaz couldn't beat Marquez one-on-one, so you really had to dislike his chances in a two-on-one match.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

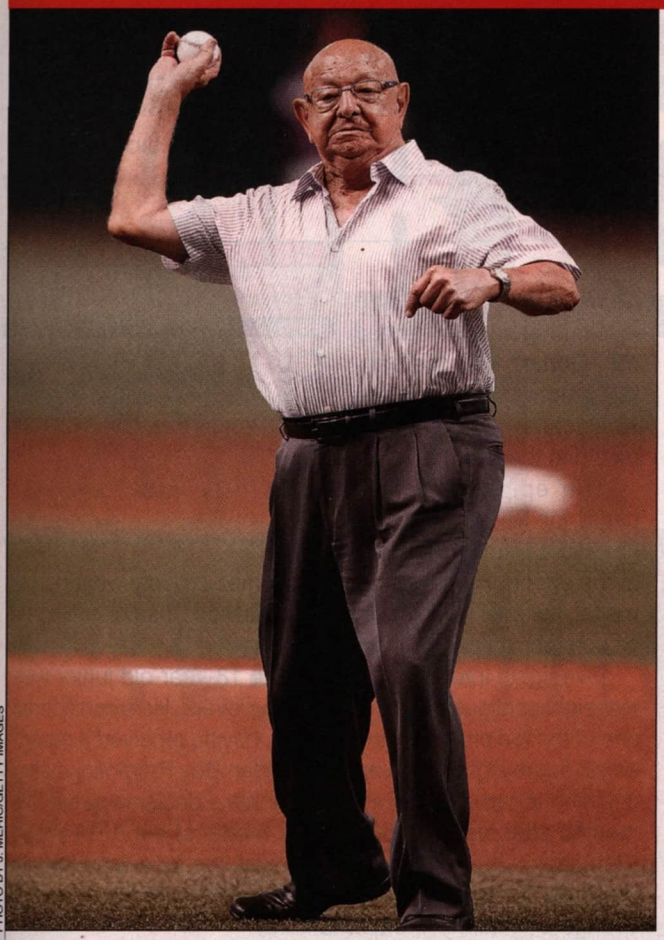

PHOTO BY J. MERIC/GETTY IMAGES

"You're throwin' it, son!" Hall of Fame trainer Angelo Dundee isn't quite tossing the ball 60 feet, six inches, but, when you're 88 years old, you've earned the right to throw from a few steps in front of the mound. Dundee had the honor of throwing out the opening pitch at a Rays-Twins game in Tampa Bay in August. If they're going to beat the Yankees in the postseason, the Rays could use a guy like Dundee in their corner.

PHOTO BY ALEX GRIMM/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

World Cup fever hasn't worn off in Germany, where former star soccer player Karl-Heinz Korbel took a moment to pose with world heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko and challenger Sam Peter in advance of their September fight. Korbel declared that he felt Klitschko would have the better future in soccer of the two boxers, based on his proven ability to flop to the ground with minimal contact like all world-class soccer players do.

PHOTO BY LEONEL MARTINEZ/JAM MEDIA/LATINCONTENT/GETTY IMAGES

As Ana Maria Torres poses inside a bull ring in Mexico City, it forces us to ask the question: Who should we be more afraid to mess with, an angry bull or Torres? Junior bantamweight titlist Torres had won six in a row coming into her September fight against the highly regarded Alesia Graf of Germany, one of the main undercard attractions supporting Erik Morales' bout with Willie Limond.

By Don Stewart

Frankie Gomez Junior Welterweight

Frankie Gomez has been talking openly of his dreams for greatness in the ring ever since age five, when he began taking boxing lessons. It wasn't for another decade, however, that trainer Ronnie Rivota began to sense that his young fighter's lofty ambitions were more than boyhood fantasies.

It all began to unfold while Gomez was on a 16-month hiatus from boxing imposed by mother Concepcion, who wanted to see her son improve his school grades. During that time, Gomez read about older US amateurs returning from world championship events without medals. "When he came back [at age 14], he trained with so much intensity," said Rivota.

A year and a half later, Gomez boarded a plane headed for Azerbaijan, site of the 2007 Cadet World Championships. During the flight, some of the other US fighters talked of just hoping to medal. Gomez confidently looked at them and said he was settling for nothing less than gold. As it turned out, Gomez won the bantamweight title, giving the Americans their lone gold medal at the event.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Pro Record

2010

April 3	Clayvonne Howard, Las Vegas, NV	KO 3
April 30	Ricardo Malfavon, Las Vegas	KO 2
May 27	Akeem Akinbode, Los Angeles, CA	KO 1
June 24	Jaime Orrantia, Los Angeles	KO 1
July 31	Ronnie Peterson, Las Vegas	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
5	5	0	0	5

The epiphany finally came for Rivota when he greeted a returning Gomez at the airport. He saw a grinning Gomez proudly wearing his medal, his goal having been accomplished. "I said, 'He could be something special,'" recalled Rivota.

Five fights into his pro career, the 18-year-old junior welterweight continues to convert new believers. He's considered one of the top prospects in the sport, having received a reported six-figure signing bonus from Golden Boy Promotions after deciding to turn pro in February. Gomez' decision came five months after his 141-pound silver medal at the AIBA World Championships in Italy, where he was the lone American to reach the finals. Only 17 at the time, Gomez was one of the youngest fighters in the tournament.

Some are already comparing Gomez to his promoter, Oscar De La Hoya. Both were top-level amateurs. Both were products of East Los Angeles, California. Both were even born on February 4. "It feels good," Gomez said of the comparisons. "Hopefully it comes true. It's all a dream come true for me. He's like my idol. We have a lot in common."

Like many participants in this sport, Gomez is a bit of a contradiction. He's humble but ambitious, confident but not cocky, and as respectful out of the ring as he is vicious inside it. If life is all about fine lines and happy mediums, Gomez seems perfectly positioned. "I'm not impatient, but I'm anxious," said Gomez, 5-0 (5). "I want to go up there and fight with those top guys [at junior welterweight]. I think I'm ready for it."

The eighth of nine children born to Mexican immigrants, Gomez isn't another fighter coming from a broken family. He grew up in a rough section of the Lincoln Heights area of Los Angeles but survived the lure of the streets with the help of strong support from his close-knit, two-parent, hard-working family. Boxing was also key. Concepcion was initially against her son being involved in the sport, but she quickly saw that the gym was a better place than the streets.

Gomez was just 5½ when he began showing up at the First Street Boxing Club in Los Angeles. He hooked up with Rivota roughly six months later. Rivota, a former De La Hoya sparring partner who had a 10-bout pro career, has been in Gomez'

(Continued on Page 108)

POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

CON CARÁCTER

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DINAMITA'S

Which Road Will Marquez Take To Canastota?

By Joseph Santoliquito

When Juan Manuel Marquez entered his locker room after vanquishing Juan Diaz a second time, he wasn't thinking about an exit plan. He was groping about trying to find a comfortable chair in which to sit down. The weight of the punishment he's absorbed in a 17-year pro career hung heavily on his face. His swollen right eye made him look like a distorted Cyclops, making it difficult to maneuver through the congested, celebratory locker room. Even so, despite the eye and the large, reddish blotches marking his features, the 37-year-old Marquez was talking about fighting again.

There is no denying that he'd performed very well retaining THE RING lightweight world championship with a 12-round unanimous decision over Diaz in front of an announced crowd of 8,383 (6,220 paid) at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center. But how much longer Marquez can continue to succeed at such a high level could very well depend on his choice of future opponents.

Less than 30 minutes later, Marquez was fielding an avalanche of questions from the media, virtually all of them about what he intended to do next. Amir Khan's name was broached, as was Michael Katsidis'. The possibility of a third go at Manny Pacquiao was also prominently mentioned.

The option of wading into the junior welterweight's deep talent pool, where Tim Bradley, Devon Alexander, Marcos Maidana, and Khan are all waiting seem the most dangerous, albeit profitable, course of action.

As Marquez adroitly steered clear of making any concrete commitment, Nacho Beristain, Marquez' trainer, mentor, and surrogate father, stood at a distance in one corner of the locker room and nodded his head. He was the one thinking of an exit plan.

"Four more fights, I see maybe four more fights for Juan Manuel and that's it, no more," Beristain said. "He's 37 and he has to think about his future. What I'd like, what I'm going to talk to him about, is having three more fights at lightweight and then maybe finish his career by winning the junior welterweight world championship. That's the goal. Nothing is set

PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

DILEMMA

in stone, but it's something I would like us to do.

"Right now, we're happy with what happened [against Diaz]. Juan Manuel put a lot of effort into this fight and he came into it in great physical condition. But he's 37, and what he's doing at this stage of his career takes a lot of dedication."

Dedication and commitment have been staples of Marquez career. That's nothing new, but there are telling signs that the end may be near, particularly the paper-thin skin around Marquez' eyes and his tendency to swell. They are clear indicators that he has arrived at the

As in their first fight, Marquez' uppercut was a major key to victory in the rematch with Diaz. He didn't score any knockdowns with the punch during their second encounter, but he rocked "The Baby Bull" several times with well-placed shots up the middle that took a lot of steam out of the challenger.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

twilight of a magnificent Hall of Fame-worthy career.

Marquez walked away from the rematch of THE RING's 2009 Fight of the Year with a cool million dollars. He also punched holes in the Roy Jones Theory, which argues that a fighter loses something when he climbs up in weight, as "Dinamita" did for his 2009 big-payday fight against Floyd Mayweather, and then drops back down to his natural weight.

But now Marquez finds himself in a quandary: Stay at lightweight and continue winning against less-lucrative

opponents or make the move to junior welter, as Marquez' promoter, Golden Boy, would like to see, and take on bigger opponents for bigger paydays at a much greater risk. It's a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't scenario.

Talking to Beristain, you get a sensible, pragmatic approach. Forget Pacquiao. Although, Marquez rails publicly for a third fight with what is now a much larger and much stronger fighter than the one he lost to by a point in their second memorable

Encore Good But Not Great

The first time, the outcome was in doubt until Juan Manuel Marquez flattened Juan Diaz in the ninth round of a thrilling battle that wound up being THE RING's 2009 Fight of the Year. This time, you pretty much knew Marquez was going to win when he wobbled Diaz in the fourth round with an uppercut.

After losing the first fight, Diaz' goal for the rematch was simple: to box and try and use his legs to make Marquez miss. In the first few rounds, it worked. The Houston, Texas, challenger popped Marquez with a few body shots and, every once in a while, engaged the Mexican legend as he did in the first fight—but with a difference. After connecting, he quickly retreated before Marquez could retaliate. In the second round, Diaz, 135, continued to use distance well and landed a thudding counter left hook.

Then something happened. Marquez, as he did the first fight, adjusted. He began fighting his range in the third round, and, by the fourth, he knew what he had to do. With the partisan crowd chanting "Marquez, Marquez, Marquez," the veteran took control. By the eighth round, however, the few punches that Diaz did manage to land were causing "Dinamita's" right eye to swell shut. But in the ninth, Marquez, 133½, opened a gash on the corner of Diaz' lip and hammered his retreating adversary with sharp punches.

The 26-year-old Diaz came on a bit the in 11th and 12th rounds, but it was too little too late. Judge Jerry Roth (USA) had it the closest, 116-112, which is how THE RING scored it, while Glenn Trowbridge (USA) scored it 118-110 and Patricia Morse Jarman (USA) had it 117-111. Vic Drakulich (USA) was the referee.

"I fought the best fight I could," said a lumped-up Diaz, 35-4 (17), at the postfight press conference. "We were trading punches. We fought in; we fought out. I didn't stand in front of him. I wanted to get in there and then get out. But it was hard, and I got hit with a couple of good shots. I did the best I could. I followed the game plan, worked off my jab, but he's a great fighter. He was the better man."

Marquez, 51-5-1 (37), was also generous in his postfight comments: "The first one was difficult, and so was this one," he said. "Diaz is a very good boxer. Like every true Mexican warrior, we both fought with all of our hearts and left it all in the ring."

You couldn't ask for more.

—J.S.

Marquez punishes Diaz in the trenches

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Trainer Nacho Beristain works on Marquez between rounds of the Diaz rematch. If Beristain has his way, Marquez will stay in the lightweight division for his next three fights, even though a move to junior welter would be more lucrative.

"Dinamita" flattens Diaz' face with a short left hook. Accuracy has always played a big part in Marquez' success, and his second victory over Diaz was no exception. According to CompuBox, Marquez landed 288 punches, compared to 155 for Diaz.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Diaz had his moments, especially in the early going. His lefts to the face succeeded in closing Marquez' right eye, but he was outboxed and outpunched most of the way by the defending champion.

PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

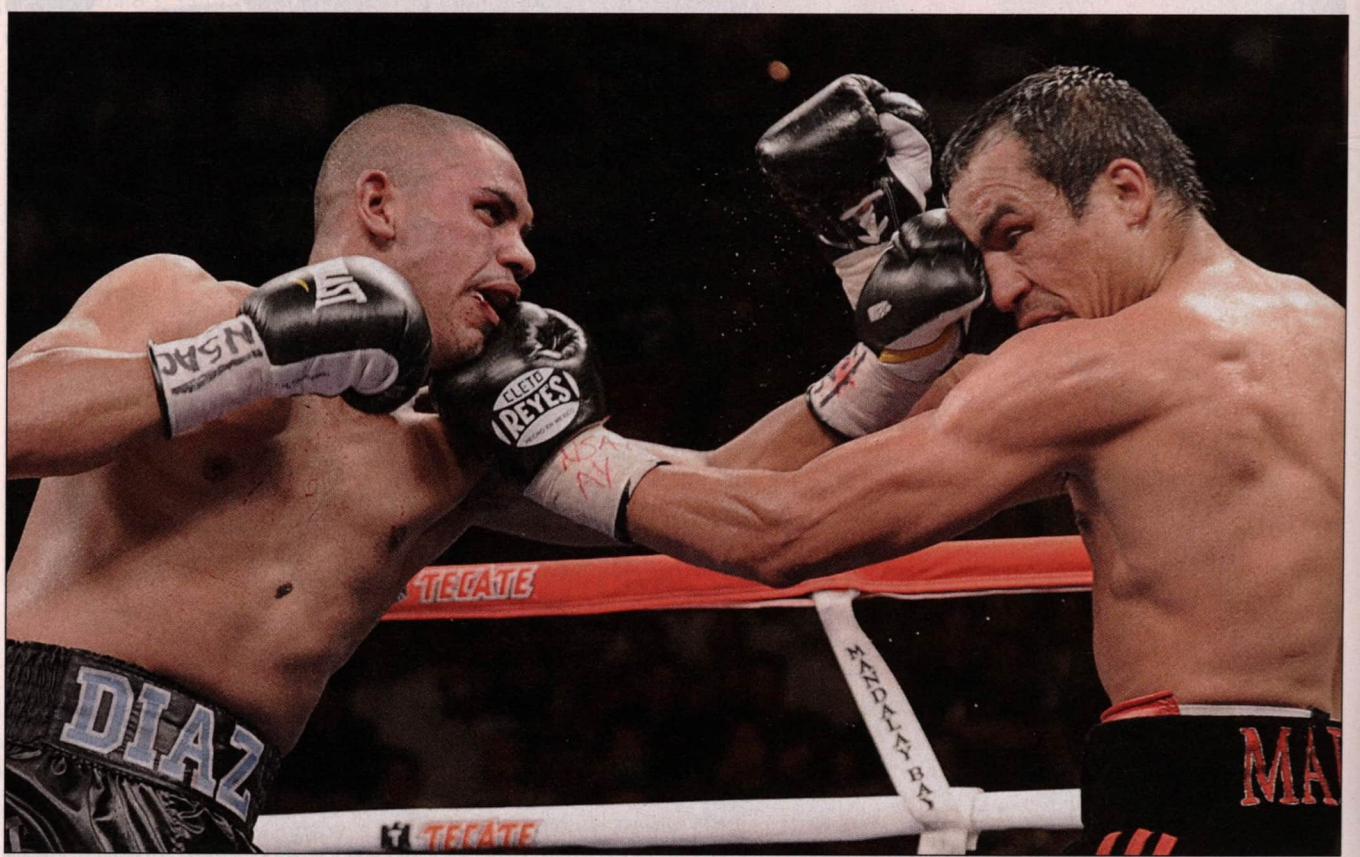


PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Blow for blow: Diaz and Marquez land simultaneous lefts during brisk action.

meeting. Such a match seems a remote possibility—at best.

"No, no, no, no, no, no more Pacquiao," emphasized Beristain, waving his hands in an animated fashion as if shooing flies at a picnic. "That's not an obsession of Juan Manuel's or our team. We're not afraid of Pacquiao and Pacquiao is not afraid of us, but we can move on and sleep at night if we don't fight Pacquiao again. I know what the talk is about and I know what people want. But we've past Pacquiao. It's up to Pacquiao to take the thorn out of his toe with us."

In all likelihood, the thorn will remain. Pacquiao is set to fight Antonio Margarito at a catchweight of 150 in November (provided they can find a venue and Margarito can get his boxing license back), and "Pac-Man" has shown no indications he'll ever fight below 147 again.

Before the possibility of Marquez moving up to junior welterweight is seriously considered, it should be noted that he weighed in at 133½ pounds for the Diaz rematch, the lightest he's been since he fought Pacquiao for THE RING junior lightweight world championship in March 2008, when he weighed 130 on the nose. Marquez could have had a milkshake and a cookie and still have easily made the 135-pound limit for Diaz.

Furthermore, Marquez is listed at 5'7," but that's akin to an exaggerated basketball program height. He is more like 5'4," with stubby arms. That could make the climb north to 140 against someone as tall and rangy as Khan very difficult.

It's why Marquez' chances of continued success is much greater at 135 pounds. Competitive bouts against Katsidis (THE RING's number-one lightweight contender) and possibly fourth-ranked Humberto Soto would be solid matches. After those two, however, the lightweight well dries up quickly.

"Marquez wants to make money and deserves big-money fights," said HBO analyst Emanuel Steward. "The real shame of it is that there may not be any big-money fights at 135 or at what I think is his real natural weight of 130. I just don't see it. I know Golden Boy was pushing for a Marquez fight with Khan, and I know big money could be there, but seriously, look at the two. It would almost be like when Marquez stepped up

Is Law School Next For Diaz?

Juan Diaz walked throughout Mandalay Bay Hotel and Casino the entire weekend and hardly anyone noticed him. He was "the other guy" going up against RING lightweight world champion Juan Manuel Marquez.

"The Baby Bull" had been in more than his fair share of wars and is respected for his grit and determination to keep coming and put on fan-friendly fights. But after losing for the fourth time on his last six bouts, it may be time for the Houston University graduate to attend law school and forget trying to continue as an elite-level fighter.

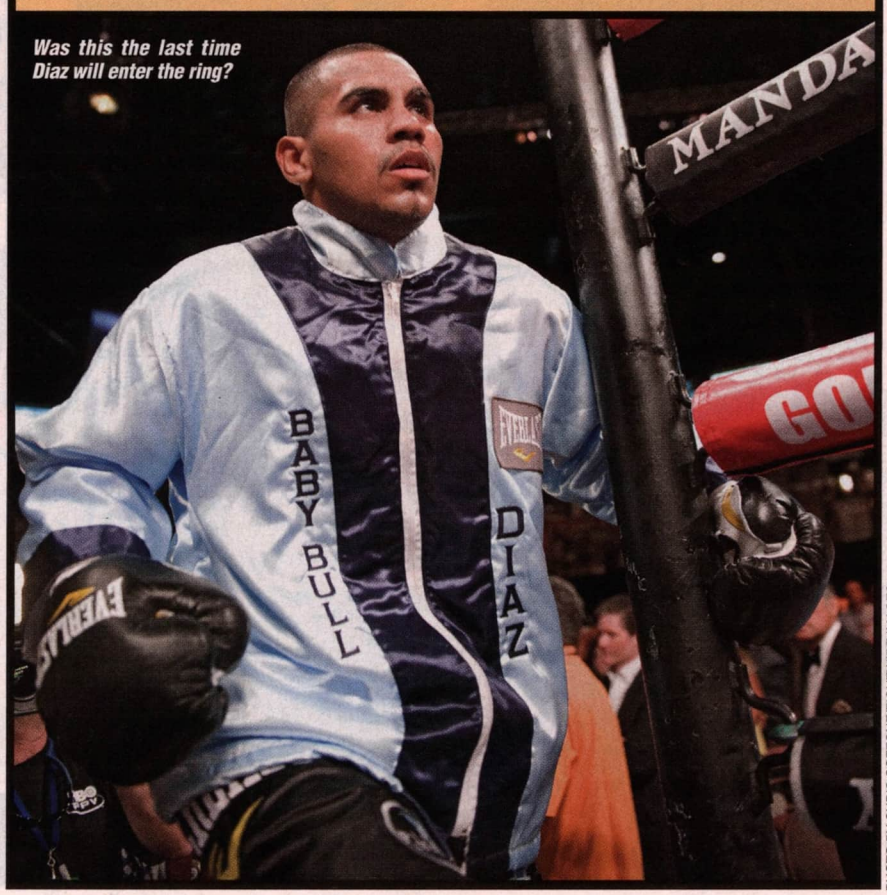
"Diaz truly is remarkable, and he's a real credit to the sport," HBO's Jim Lampley said. "How far he's gotten in boxing is amazing considering he can't punch very hard, hasn't completely honed his craft, and has won on sheer heart and determination. Something has to be said about that. The shame of it is, at a relatively young age, he could be through."

Immediately after the fight, however, Diaz was ambiguous about his future plans. Although he shut Marquez' right eye, Diaz was pretty scuffed himself afterward. And the internal conflict all fighters encounter after losing a big fight was apparent when he faced the media.

"It's hard to say what will be next," Diaz said. "I really don't know what I'm going to do. I have to look at my situation. I'm getting ready for the LSATs and I've been doing this ever since I was 16. That's 10 years. I'll have to figure it out and see what I'm going to do. But I can't commit right now, not after this fight, and honestly tell you that I'm never going to fight again."

Whatever he decides, nobody could ever say that he hasn't earned every dollar he's made inside a boxing ring.

—J.S.



Was this the last time Diaz will enter the ring?

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

to fight two weights over his real weight when he took on Mayweather."

Khan, who was seated ringside with his father during the Marquez-Diaz rematch, is 5'10" and has a 71-inch reach, giving the budding British superstar a six-inch height advantage and four-inch edge in reach over Marquez. "King Khan" stood on the periphery of the postfight Marquez-Diaz press conference crowd, but to the few reporters who approached him about a potential future bout with the grizzled superstar, Khan sounded to be very receptive to the idea.

"Marquez is great and it's an opportunity I'd love to have, if it can be made," Khan said. "I'd love that fight. It would be a real challenge for me. I know there's a slight size difference, but I also know Marquez is the type of fighter who will keep coming and coming. Yes, I would love that chance to fight him."

But is it physically feasible for Marquez to bulk up and make that step again, as he did for Mayweather, to meet Khan?

"The beating Mayweather put on Marquez looks like it didn't take anything from Marquez," HBO blow-by-blow man Jim Lampley said. "His confidence wasn't disturbed by it. And he looked dominant against Diaz, a boxer with less boxing skill. At the end of the day, Marquez was Marquez. His victory over Diaz was good for him and good for the sport.

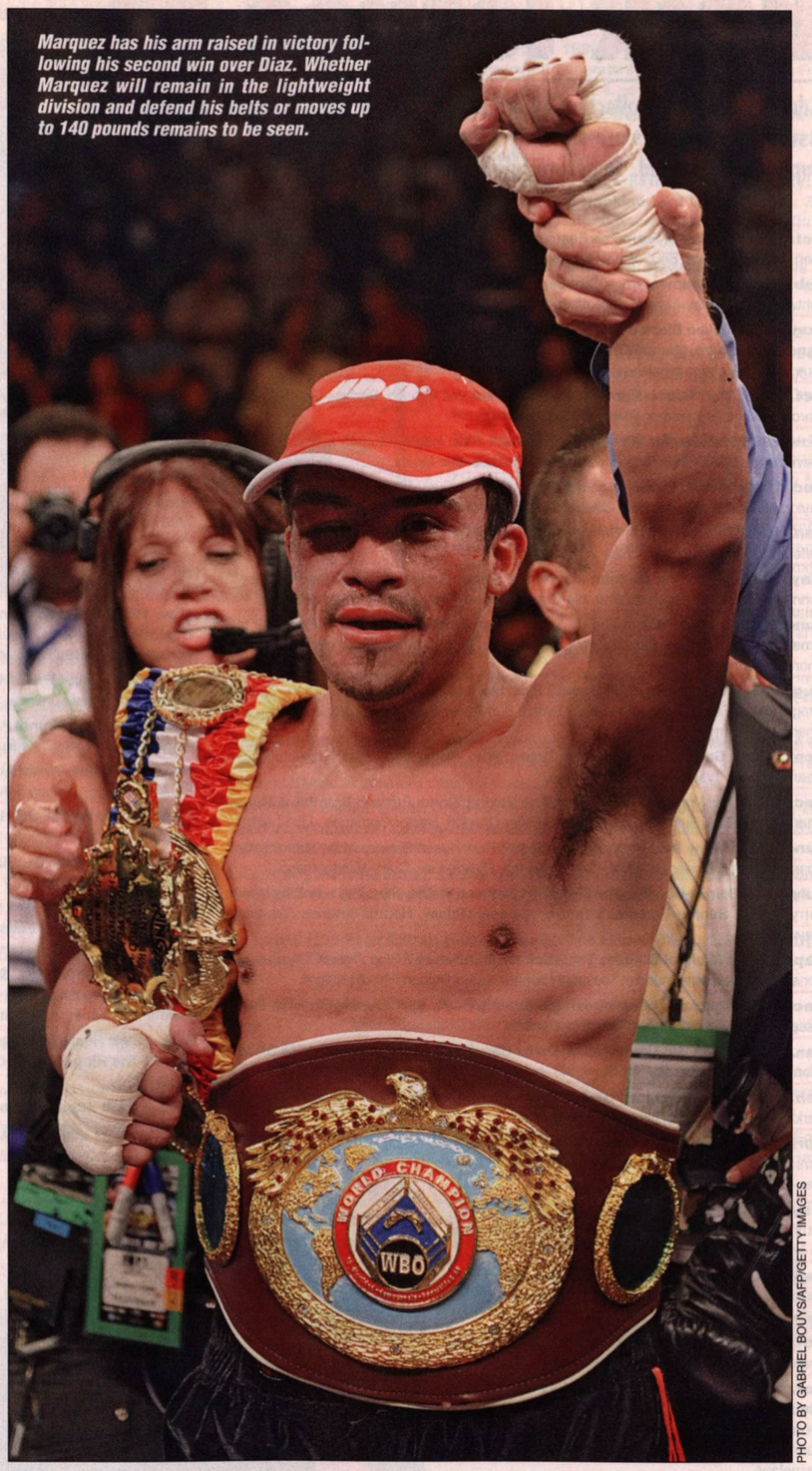
"But here's the reality: We know Pacquiao-Marquez won't happen again. He should think about staying at 135, and he's a very small lightweight at that. Facing Soto is one option. It's a way of solidifying Marquez' stance at lightweight and as the best Mexican fighter in the world. Like Soto, Katsidis is another hard guy. But Marquez is pushing the limits going beyond 135. If he fights Khan, he could be embarrassed by him the same way Paulie Malignaggi was. I said during the Marquez-Diaz broadcast as Marquez' eye was beginning to swell: 'This guy has been in some unbelievable wars.'"

How many more wars can Marquez endure? He was forced to take the Mayweather fight to remain solvent. Several sources confirm he was having financial difficulties due to some poor investments that depleted his bank account. Now, with a grounded financial situation, he doesn't have to take those risks.

"Boxing can't lose someone like Marquez. He's too valuable," Steward said. "I think that's what might happen if he decided to go back up again in weight. He goes after guys, he goes all out and tries to win and there aren't enough guys in boxing today that do that. It's hurting boxing. Too many guys fight safe. If Marquez were to move up and fight Khan or any of the major contenders at 140, we may not have him much longer.

Pictured with David Haye, Shane Mosley, and Oscar De La Hoya at the Marquez-Diaz weigh-in are two possible future opponents for Marquez: WBA junior welterweight titleholder Amir Khan (second from the left) and The Ring's number-one lightweight contender Michael Katsidis (between Khan and Mosley).

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES



Marquez has his arm raised in victory following his second win over Diaz. Whether Marquez will remain in the lightweight division and defend his belts or moves up to 140 pounds remains to be seen.

PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

I know the money could be there, but the smart move is to stay where he is and continue to dominate. This way, everyone wins."

Although the purses won't be as large at lightweight, Marquez could conceivably keep rolling for a few more years if he continues to campaign in the division he rules as world champion. Beristain's exit plan is a good one. Besides, nobody wants to see Marquez still groping for chairs once his career is over. ■

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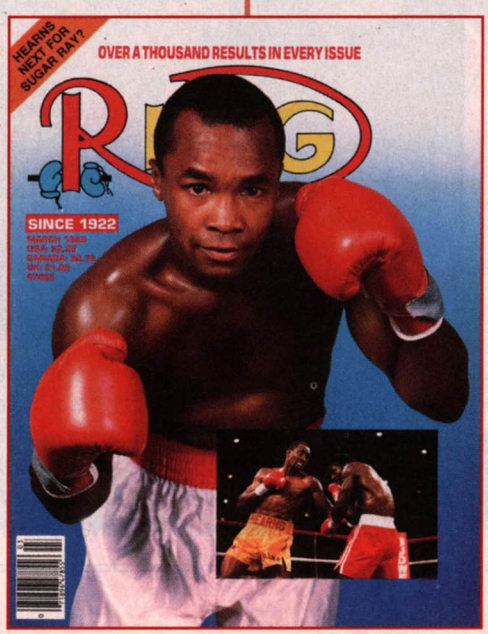

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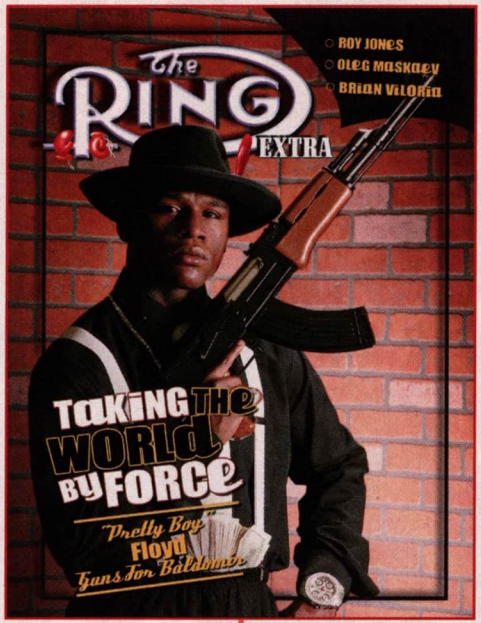

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"MONEY" MEETS HIS MATCH

10 Guys Who Would Have Kicked Mayweather's Butt

By Eric Raskin

If you took a poll of every boxing fan on the planet and asked which active fighter they'd most like to see get his rear end kicked in the ring, the results wouldn't be close. Floyd "Money" Mayweather would win in a landslide. Sure, the Klitschkos might get a small slice of the voting pie. Manny Pacquiao would be the choice of the diehard Mayweather fans. Bernard Hopkins, David Haye, Carl Froch, Antonio Margarito—they'd all get a handful of votes. But even if you added together all the ballots cast for all of those fighters, it still might not approach Mayweather's total.

And to a certain extent, this is all by Mayweather's design. At some point in his career, he realized his best hope for making obscene amounts of money was to give people a reason to hate him—and to hate him so much that they wouldn't dare miss one of his fights if there was any chance he was going to lose. He has two things going for him that fuel this dynamic: One is his carefully crafted narcissistic persona; the other is the zero at the end of his record. That combination has countless fight fans—and quite a few mainstream sports fans—dying to watch him take a pounding.

Most boxing writers are fans too, of course, and the truth is, quite a few of us supposedly impartial journalists would delight in Mayweather's demise. But that doesn't mean that the anti-Mayweather faction—the "haters," to use today's popular terminology—don't respect his skills. It's impossible not to admire how adept Mayweather is at his craft. It's impossible to deny that there are but a handful of active fighters in or around the welterweight division who have a realistic chance of beating him. And it's because of those realities, because even the so-called haters respect Mayweather's talent so much, that articles about who can beat this five-division titlist often have to reach into the past and call upon some of boxing's all-time greats.

Sure, we could shred Mayweather for avoiding the current fighters who do pose threats to him, like Pacquiao or Paul Williams. But the reality is, if those fights ever happened, Mayweather would probably be the betting favorite. *Maybe* he'd get his butt kicked. But for some fans, *maybe* isn't good enough. Hence this special section spotlighting 10 fighters we firmly believe *would* have erased Mayweather's zero.

All of the fighters on the following pages fought in the divisions in which Mayweather has campaigned as a pro: from junior lightweight up to welterweight (we're not counting one catchweight fight at 150 pounds). And they're all Hall of Famers or will be soon. So there's no shame in losing to any of these guys. The fact that we're picking them to get the better of Mayweather doesn't make THE RING's staff a bunch of biased haters. It just means that we don't believe Money's rhetoric that he's the greatest fighter of all-time.

And even if he is, hey, the greatest fighters of all-time can still get their butts kicked. Here are 10 pugilists we believe would give Mayweather the beating that much of the boxing public is dreaming of.

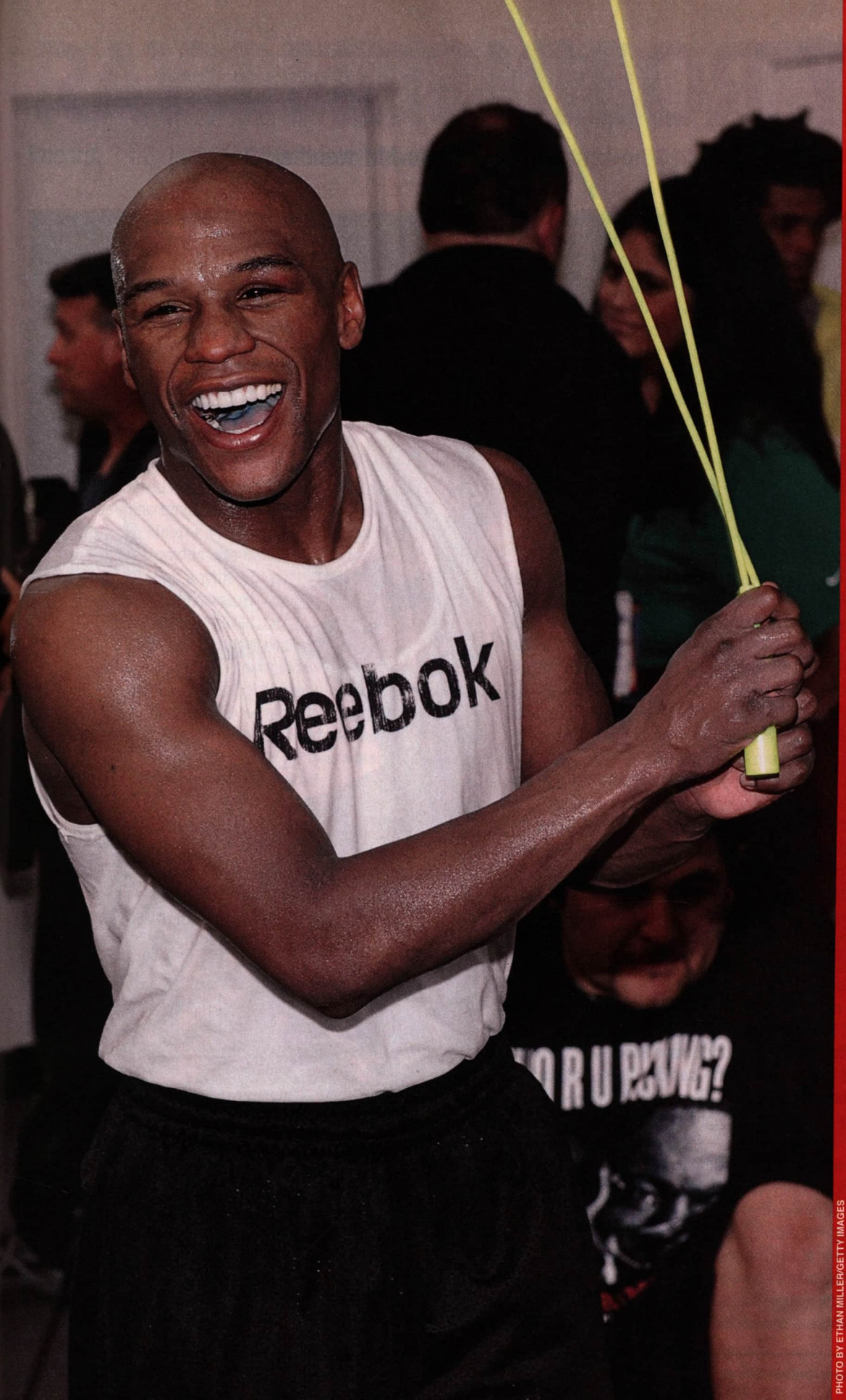


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

RAY ROBINSON

Record: 175-19-6 (109) with 2 no-contests Division vs. Mayweather: Welterweight

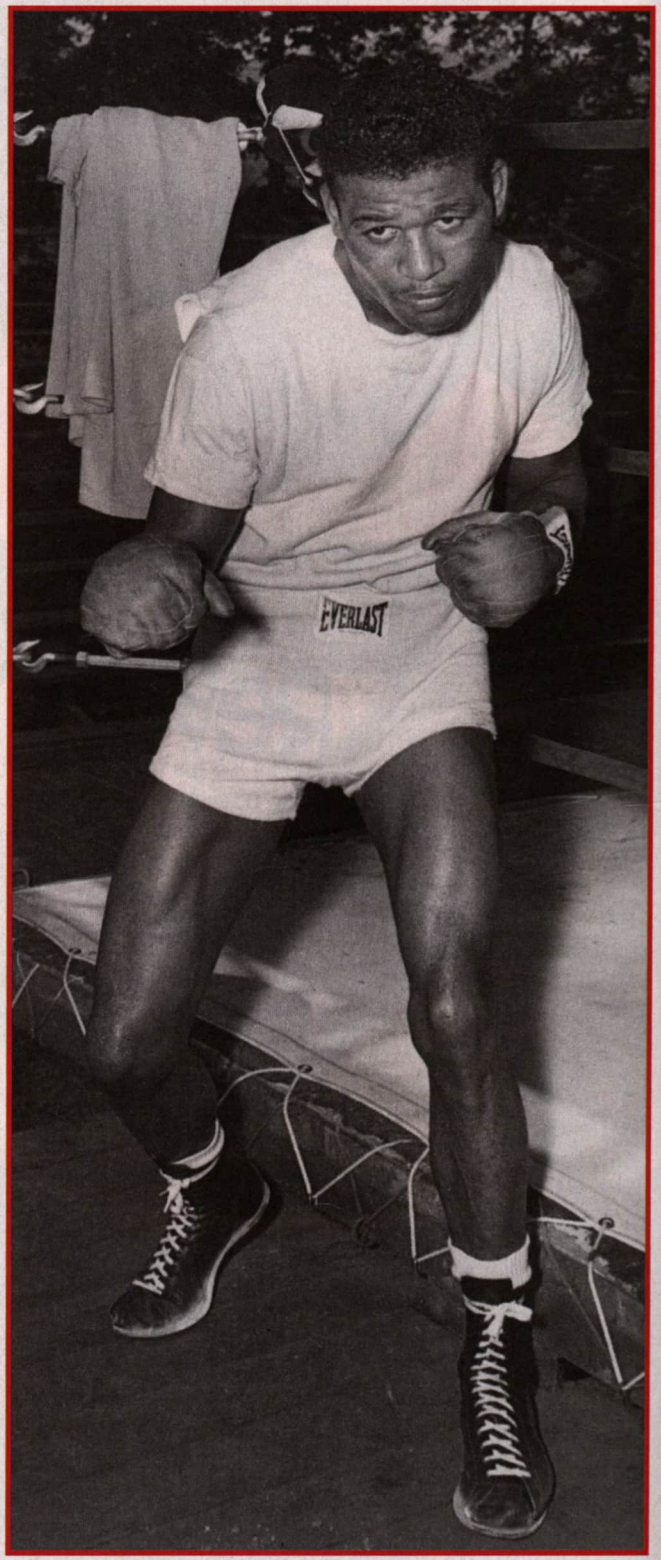
When Mayweather makes his laughable claims about being the G.O.A.T., better even than the original "Sugar Ray," he points to those 19 losses on Robinson's record. If he wants to do that, we'll point to the 175 wins. That beats the crap out of the paltry 41 wins on Mayweather's record. And it should be noted that 18 of Robinson's 19 defeats came in his last 68 fights. In his first 134 fights, he lost exactly once, against future Hall of Famer Jake LaMotta. So, please, Floyd, don't expose your ignorance trying to compare your resume to that of the *true* G.O.A.T.

At 147 pounds, Robinson was the closest thing boxing has ever seen to unbeatable. In fact, he was unbeaten in welterweight fights. The only time he lost weighing 147 pounds or less, LaMotta was in the other corner weighing 160½. The welterweight version of Sugar Ray Robinson was the perfect fighting machine.

A lot of old timers' styles would have been too crude to beat Mayweather, which is why we couldn't confidently put legends like Ted "Kid" Lewis or the original Joe Walcott on this list. But Robinson is one old-timer whose style remains modern some 60 years later. He had all of Mayweather's speed and skills, plus knockout power that got him ranked by THE RING as the 11th-greatest puncher of all-time as of 2003. Knockout power is one thing that is lacking from Mayweather's game, especially at welterweight, where he has fought six times and stopped only blown-up junior welters Sharmba Mitchell and Ricky Hatton. Mayweather has enough pop to stun a top guy from time to time, but you can forget about him hurting Robinson. You're talking about a fighter who was kayoed once in 202 fights, and that came when he moved all the way up to light heavyweight and wilted in the 103-degree Yankee Stadium heat against Joey Maxim. Robinson had one of the greatest chins in boxing history. He would have no fear of Mayweather whatsoever.

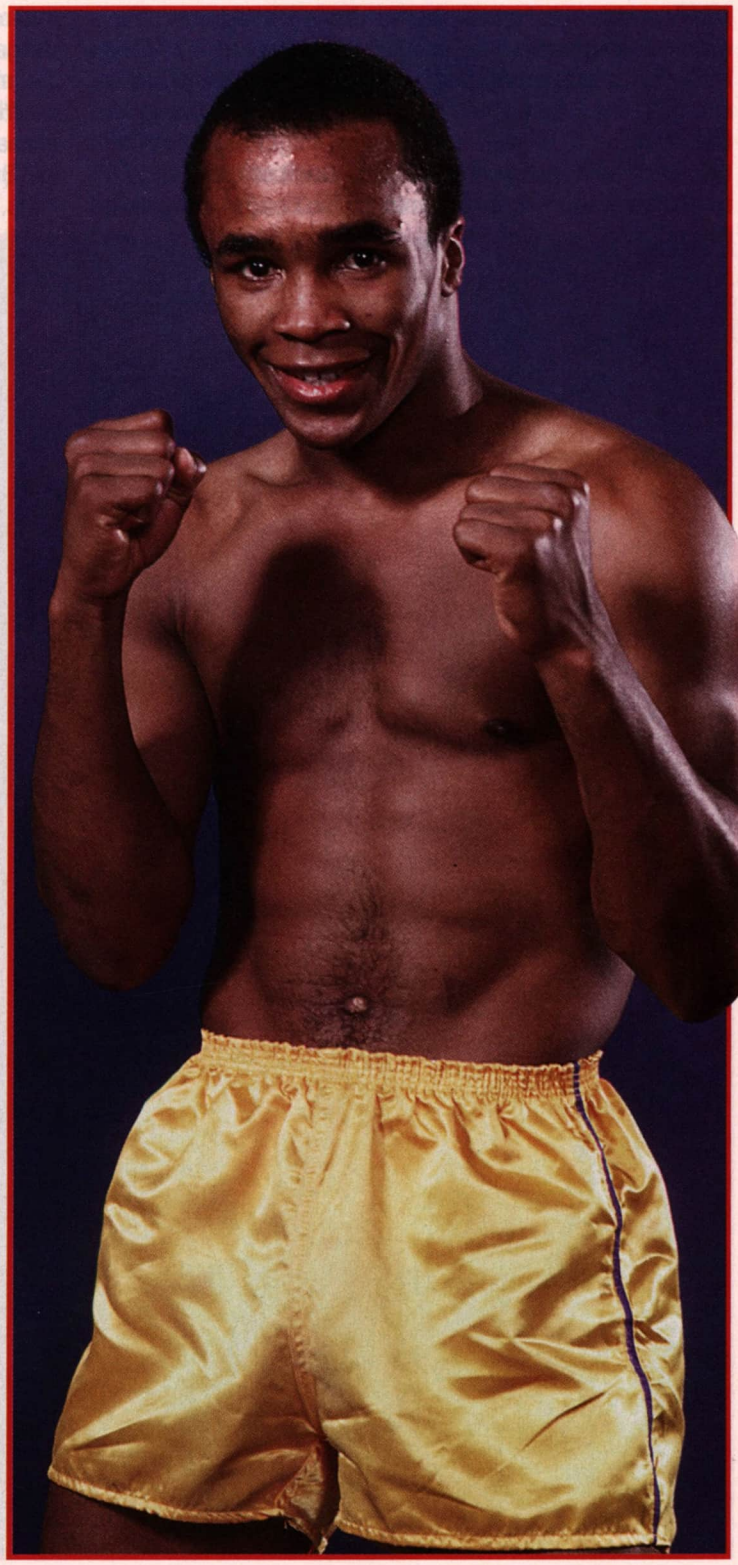
And on top of that, he would have the edge over Mayweather in one more key category: willingness to go to war. We must admit, Money showed guts the way he fought back aggressively after getting hurt by Shane Mosley in his most recent fight. We now know that he *can* dig deep. But we saw Robinson do it time and again. Who do you think would have the mental edge late in a close fight in which both guys have been hurt?

Actually, never mind that hypothetical question; this wouldn't be a close fight in which both guys get hurt. This would be a rout, with Mayweather getting rocked a time or two, generally finding he didn't have the answers and deciding midway through that lasting the distance would be a moral victory. Sugar Ray might knock him out anyway, but we'll give Mayweather the benefit of the doubt and say he limps across the finish line to lose a one-sided decision.



RAY LEONARD

Record: 36-3-1 (25) Division vs. Mayweather: Welterweight



About five years ago, Mayweather got into a verbal confrontation with Leonard at an awards dinner in Las Vegas and showed an alarming lack of respect for the man who handed Mayweather's dad his second pro loss. Money Mayweather didn't simply boast that he's better than Leonard ever was—which would be blasphemy, certainly, but blasphemy within the realm of reasonable self-promotion at least. Rather, Mayweather insisted Leonard wouldn't be ranked in the top 10 if he were fighting in Floyd's era. (And Mayweather fans wonder why the haters hate)

There was a time in Leonard's career when many observers considered him soft and a pretty boy, but, by the time he was done tangling with Wilfred Benitez, Roberto Duran, Thomas Hearns, Marvin Hagler, and the rest of the best of a true golden age from 147-160 pounds, you couldn't question him anymore. Leonard was an all-time great. In the minds of some, he was the best pound-for-pound since Robinson.

Like both Robinson and Mayweather, Leonard had blinding quickness, superior technique, and a charming smile. In terms of the number of fights he had, his career more closely resembles Mayweather's. In terms of the quality of the opposition he faced, his career more closely resembles Robinson's. And until he was washed up, Leonard beat every opponent he faced. In his prime at 147 pounds, he could do everything Mayweather could do but with a little more power and a lot more hunger to convince everyone of his greatness.

Leonard vs. Mayweather is no blowout. When Sugar Ray defeated Benitez, a defensive whiz like Mayweather, it wasn't easy; Leonard held a small lead before stopping Benitez in the 15th. His wins over Hearns and Hagler weren't easy either. At the elite level, Leonard didn't dominate guys. But he had that special quality that, in every fight except the first Duran fight, enabled him to produce at the key moments.

And that would be the difference against Mayweather. There would be stretches where the boxing match is closely contested and hard to score. And then there would be key moments, with the fight seemingly hanging in the balance, where Mayweather's single shots would be trumped when Leonard explodes with combinations that stagger Mayweather and steal the round. Maybe Leonard wouldn't "kick Mayweather's butt," as the title of this article suggests. But he'd be the only guy in the ring hurting the other man, and he'd take a unanimous decision.

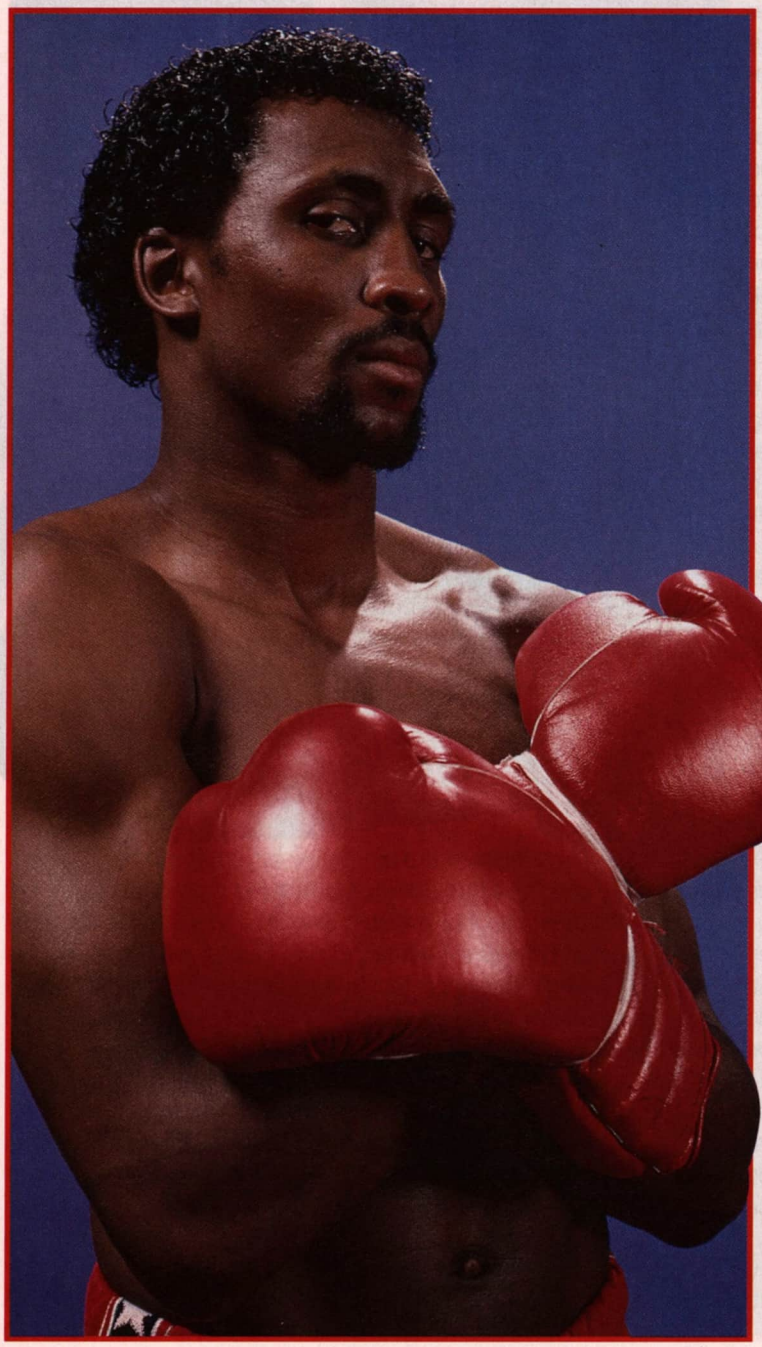
Sugar Ray Leonard wouldn't just be in the top 10 in Mayweather's welterweight division. He'd be in the top one.

THOMAS HEARNS

Record: 61-5-1 (48) Division vs. Mayweather: Welterweight

There's a belief among many in boxing that Mayweather is "ducking" Paul Williams. To be fair, nobody at 147 pounds particularly wants to fight Williams, and the financial reward for facing him doesn't come close to compensating for the difficulty of the task. So "ducking" might be a word with unwarranted negative connotations. But it still remains conventional wisdom that Mayweather isn't eager to fight him and recognizes that it's a fight he could lose. Now double the danger Williams presents, and you've got a prime, welterweight Tommy Hearns.

Williams is often compared to Hearns because, hey, who else are you going to compare a world-class 6'1" welterweight to? But Hearns had far more punching power than Williams does, had better technique, and pumped a more effective jab. If Williams gets the "freak" label, Hearns got "freak" plus "beast" on top of it.



It's quite possible that there was never a better hitter at 147 pounds than "The Hit Man." He didn't go past the third round until his 14th fight. His second-round blastout of Pipino Cuevas to claim his first title is legendary. And even though it came at junior middleweight, his two-round destruction of Roberto Duran is even more legendary.

And Hearns' lone loss at welterweight did as much to cement his greatness as any of his victories. Sugar Ray Leonard stopped him in the 14th round, but Hearns led on all three scorecards at the time and, for much of the fight, was outboxing Leonard. That's bad news for Mayweather.

Of course, Hearns did have one major weakness: an unreliable chin. But in a fight with Mayweather, how much would it matter? The erstwhile "Pretty Boy" isn't a puncher. He can't do what Leonard and Marvin Hagler and Iran Barkley did. (And by the way, those are the only guys who stopped Hearns other than when Uriah Grant beat him due to a leg injury, so maybe the fragility of Hearns' chin has become a tad overstated.) Mayweather would have to outbox an opponent with a five-inch height advantage and a six-inch reach advantage who had excellent boxing skills of his own and could bomb you out with a single punch at any second.

Leonard managed to beat Hearns, but it took until the 14th round. In a 12-rounder, Hearns would have won that bout on points. As we learned against Mosley, Mayweather has a fighter's instincts when things start going badly. So if he was to get hurt against Hearns, he probably wouldn't just look to run and survive. But this isn't a 38-year-old Mosley standing in front of him. We're talking about a 23-year-old Hearns. When Mayweather gets stunned and opens up, Hearns would take advantage of the opening with his trademark right hand. For those who dream of seeing Mayweather snoring on the canvas, Hearns is the welterweight to do it, stretching him somewhere between the eighth and 10th rounds.

AARON PRYOR

Record: 39-1 (35) Division vs. Mayweather: Junior Welterweight

Remember how much Jose Luis Castillo's pressure bothered Mayweather in their first fight? To this day, some observers don't take Mayweather's undefeated record seriously because they believe the judges bailed him out that night. However you scored it, he looked awfully uncomfortable and was running as fast as his feet could carry him down the stretch.

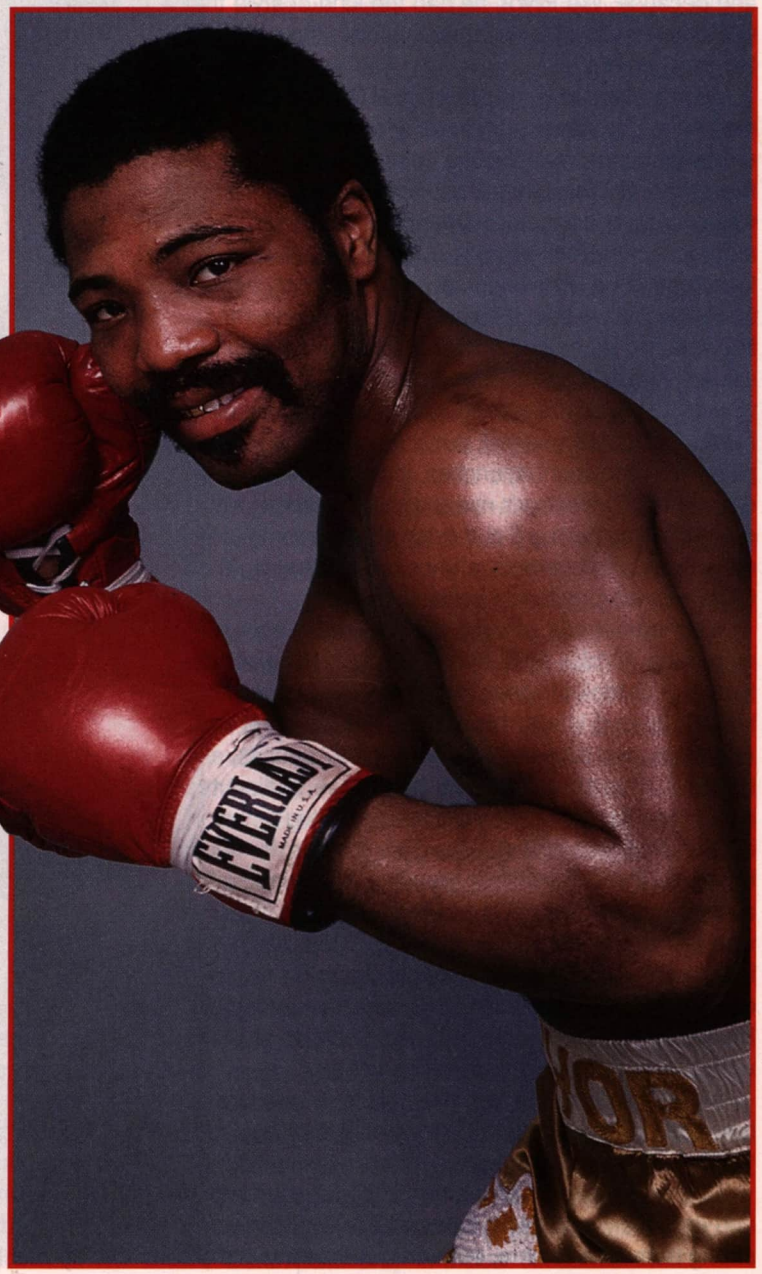
Well, compared to the pressure that Pryor would apply, those 12 rounds with Castillo were a casual Sunday morning stroll through a fragrant rose garden.

Castillo applied pressure and wasn't shy about working the body, but he never punched with the volume and tenacity of Pryor, who threw as many as 130 punches a round in the opening stanza of his career-defining first fight with Alexis Arguello. Add to that the power, which saw "The Hawk" post a career 87.5 percent knockout rate, and you had a man whose offense would have overwhelmed Mayweather. Tucking your chin behind your shoulder and using your sharp reflexes to twist and roll is nice for self-preservation purposes. But it doesn't win you rounds.

Some people have trouble envisioning Mayweather losing because they haven't actually seen him lose yet (that first Castillo fight notwithstanding). If he sticks around long enough, though, he will lose eventually. Pryor was a perfect example of a fighter who never lost in his prime. His only defeat came when he was 32 and had such severe vision loss in one eye that he probably shouldn't have been licensed. Had he been denied a license, he would have had the same zero on his record that the Mayweather fans always point to.

It's up for debate whether Pryor is the greatest 140-pounder of all-time, but he's certainly in the discussion. Mayweather, on the other hand, is nowhere near the discussion. His resume at junior welterweight was a joke. He fought in the division only three times, outpointing DeMarcus "Chop Chop" Corley, stopping Henry Bruseles, and slaughtering Arturo Gatti. He came, he saw, he cherry-picked, he never conquered, and he left. Kostya Tszyu was the true champion when Mayweather signed to fight Gatti. All Mayweather did was grab a cheapened alphabet belt and jump up to welterweight. Hey, that's fine; that happens all the time in boxing nowadays. But you simply can't call Money an all-time great junior welterweight if he didn't score a meaningful win in the division.

Of course, a weak resume isn't what would get him beaten by Pryor. Pryor's style and Pryor's talent are what would have led to Floyd getting his butt kicked. Mayweather probably would have beaten Tszyu if he'd chosen to take on the true champ in 2004 or 2005. But if he had come along between 1980 and 1983 and decided to take on the true champ, then he would have gotten outworked and battered—and if it was scheduled for 15 rounds, as it would have been at the time, we're thinking he would have gotten stopped.



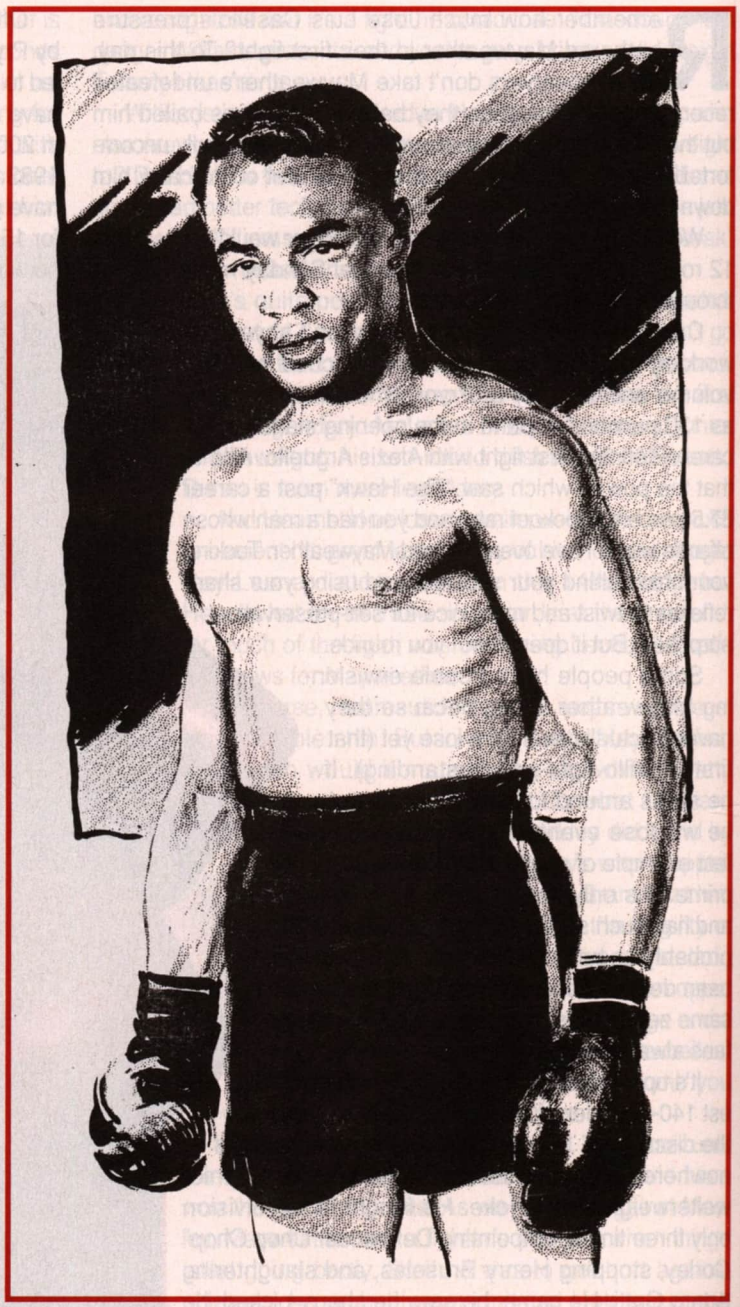
HENRY ARMSTRONG

Record: 151-21-9 (101) Division vs. Mayweather: Lightweight

One guy has had the nicknames "Pretty Boy" and "Money." The other had nicknames including the words "Homicide," "Hurricane," and "Hammerin'." Who are you going to be more intimidated by?

Of course, boxing matches aren't won through intimidation. So we're not picking Armstrong to beat Mayweather on account of nastier nicknames. We're picking him to win because he was an all-around better fighter and because, like Pryor, he had the kind of style that would never allow Mayweather to dictate the pace and terms of combat.

Another Armstrong nickname was "The Human Windmill," which describes his style well. His arms were forever churning, but he wasn't just a volume/pressure fighter like, say, Juan Diaz. He was also a heavy puncher, a guy with enough skill to defeat larger men, and, importantly, a fighter with a rock-solid chin. Let's recall that in his four fights as a lightweight, Mayweather only scored one kayo. We've said it before, but it bears repeating: Mayweather is not a devastating puncher. So the iron-chinned Armstrong, who was stopped twice in 181 fights, wouldn't have any reason to veer from his game plan. He'd smother Mayweather, punch relentlessly—absorb plenty of sharp counterpunches, to be sure—and keep ripping into Mayweather's ribs and chin. Armstrong would get in Mayweather's grill and catch him with some of the most quick and compact left hooks ever thrown, then follow with full-torque right hands in rhythm.



Mayweather has gone up the scale admirably, winning titles at 130, 135, 140, 147, and 154 pounds. However, it took Mayweather nine years to get from his 130-pound title to his 154-pound alphabet belt. Armstrong won titles at 126, 135, and 147 pounds, and he did it all in 10 months. He held three undisputed championships simultaneously, without using a "junior" division. And if not for a dubious draw decision, he would have won the middleweight title also. It's a remarkable accomplishment. As good as Mayweather is, when he was the junior lightweight champ in 1999, could you imagine him beating a welterweight Oscar De La Hoya or Felix Trinidad? That's basically what Armstrong did. He could make featherweight but was beating all of the world's best welterweights for a little while.

And if you think Mayweather's 41-0 (25) record is pretty, how does 27-0 (26) sound? That was Armstrong's record—in 1937 alone.

Still, in the ring, Mayweather's speed, counterpunching, and defense would serve him well. He would frustrate Armstrong from time to time, but he wouldn't have the punch to discourage him. So while Money might win some exchanges here and there, Armstrong would keep pummeling away. Mayweather would have trouble convincing the judges to give him rounds because he'd be the guy moving backward and getting outworked all fight. And ultimately, it wouldn't matter if he did win rounds. All those punches from Armstrong would take their toll, and eventually Mayweather would wilt. Call it Armstrong by knockout in about 10 rounds.

ROBERTO DURAN

Record: 103-16 (70) Division vs. Mayweather: Lightweight

There's a tendency when we think of Duran—especially the prime version that ran roughshod over the lightweight division in the 1970s, making 12 defenses and winning 11 of them by knockout—to picture a ferocious, balls-to-the-wall animal. And there's nothing inaccurate about that image. But it's incomplete. It leaves out the fact that the Panamanian icon was also a highly skilled and clever boxer.

Would you say Duran was as skilled and clever as Mayweather? Probably not. But the gap there is considerably narrower than in the other department. In terms of brawling, power, and furious attacking, it's a landslide in favor of "Hands Of Stone."

As is the case in many of these comparisons, Mayweather's resume in the division in question falls way short. Money wasn't a lightweight for long and the only championship-caliber opponent he faced, Castillo, gave him hell. Those two fights—including the second one, which Mayweather eked out by two points on two of the scorecards—were as close as any title fight Duran had in the division. And Castillo was an outstanding fighter in his prime, but you certainly wouldn't say he was any better than the top guys Duran defeated, such as Ken Buchanan and Esteban DeJesus.

Again, however, fights aren't won based on resumes. They're won on ability and style, and Duran is the third fighter in a row in this article, following Pryor and Armstrong, with an in-your-face style that would pose problems for Mayweather. Money likes to be in control. He likes his opponents to find his hand speed troublesome and become passive as a result. Duran was about as passive in the ring back in the '70s as he is at the buffet nowadays.

Mayweather backers will point to the infamous "no mas" fight against Ray Leonard as a blueprint for how to beat Duran, but they'll be forgetting a key point—that wasn't the lightweight Duran and it was a Duran who might have been physically compromised (the rumor goes that he didn't train his hardest and overate the day of the fight). It would be a lot harder to box circles around a Duran who was 135 pounds and in peak form. Maybe it wouldn't be impossible for Mayweather to do, but it would at least be highly unlikely.

More likely: Mayweather would try to stick and move, and Duran would cut off the ring, repeatedly hammering to the body. The first eight rounds or so would be close. Then the pressure and body attack would start to take their toll, and Mayweather wouldn't have the pop to keep Duran off. Like the slick Edwin Viruet—the lone lightweight title challenger who lasted the distance with Duran—Mayweather would be able to find ways to survive (especially if it was taking place today and was only scheduled for 12 rounds). But it would turn into a runaway down the stretch, with Mayweather's arms dropping, reflexes slowing, and face blowing up as Duran pulls away for a clear-cut decision win.

PERNELL WHITAKER

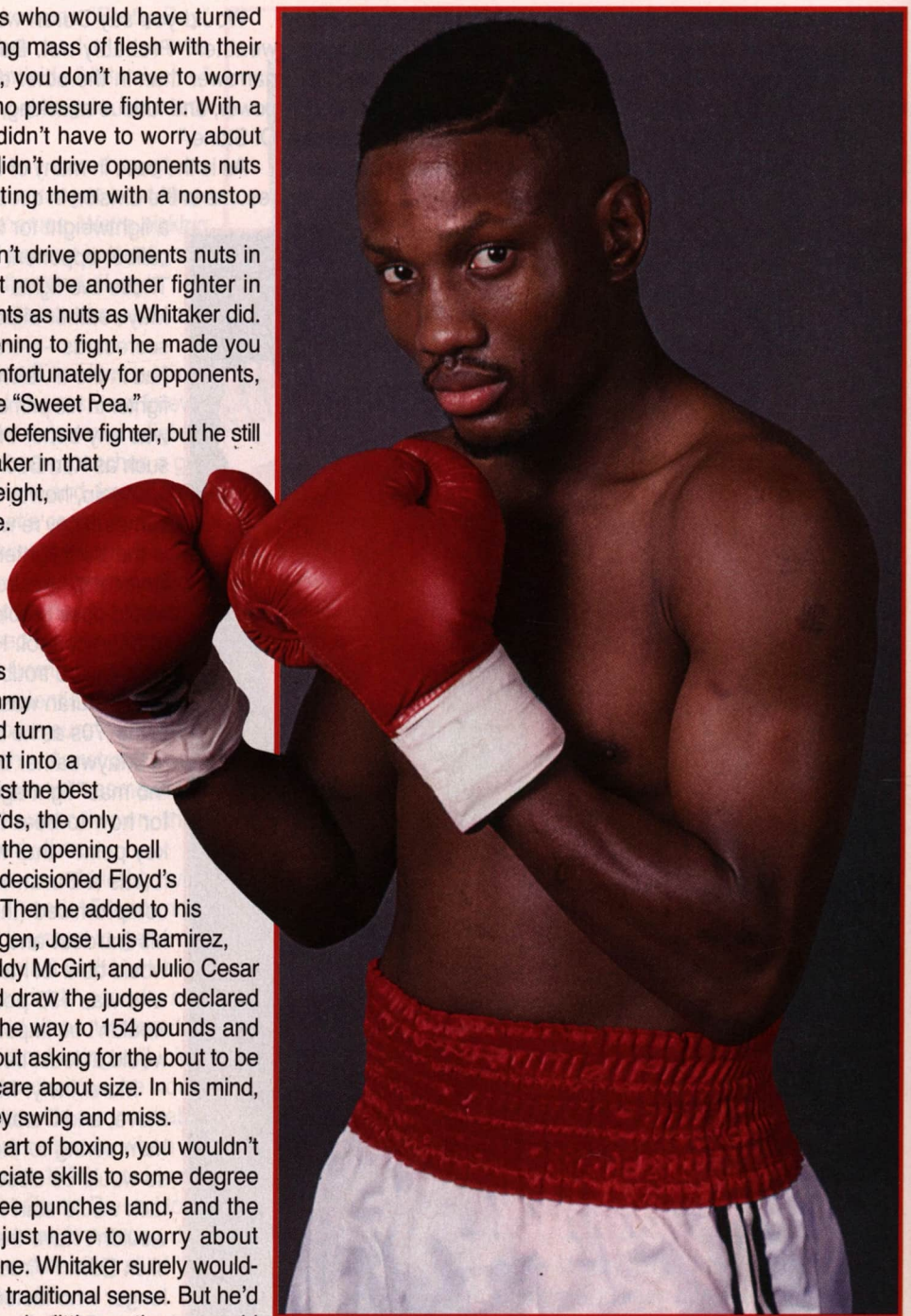
Record: 40-4-1 (17) with 1 no-contest **Division vs. Mayweather:** Lightweight

Tired of reading about guys who would have turned Mayweather into a quivering mass of flesh with their relentless pressure? Well, you don't have to worry about that here. Whitaker was no pressure fighter. With a couple of rare exceptions, you didn't have to worry about him turning your lights out. He didn't drive opponents nuts by getting in close and tormenting them with a nonstop onslaught of leather.

But that doesn't mean he didn't drive opponents nuts in other ways. Indeed, there might not be another fighter in modern times who drove opponents as nuts as Whitaker did. He was so frustrating, so maddening to fight, he made you just want to punch something. Unfortunately for opponents, that something wasn't going to be "Sweet Pea."

Mayweather is an all-time great defensive fighter, but he still falls a notch or two short of Whitaker in that regard. In his prime as a lightweight, Whitaker was virtually unhittable. He never had moments as scary as the one Mayweather experienced in the second round against Mosley. He could stand directly in front of you with his hands down by his waist and shimmy an inch this way or that way and turn every offering from his opponent into a gust of wind. And he did it all against the best possible opposition; in other words, the only ducking Whitaker did came after the opening bell rang. In just his 12th pro fight, he decisioned Floyd's future trainer, Roger Mayweather. Then he added to his resume such names as Greg Haugen, Jose Luis Ramirez, Azumah Nelson, Jorge Paez, Buddy McGirt, and Julio Cesar Chavez (regardless of the absurd draw the judges declared it to be). And he even moved all the way to 154 pounds and dominated a titleholder there without asking for the bout to be at a catchweight. Whitaker didn't care about size. In his mind, the bigger they are, the harder they swing and miss.

Unless you're a true fan of the art of boxing, you wouldn't enjoy this fight. Hey, we all appreciate skills to some degree or another, but we also like to see punches land, and the CompuBox guys would mostly just have to worry about counting punches thrown in this one. Whitaker surely wouldn't "kick Mayweather's butt" in the traditional sense. But he'd break him down mentally. The sneaky little southpaw would out-Mayweather Mayweather and eventually turn Money into the frustrated aggressor who starts making mistakes. Plenty of rounds would be difficult to score. But then there would be those moments in which Whitaker embarrasses Mayweather with his defense, followed by moments in which Whitaker lands an eye-catching combination. Remember the trouble Zab Judah's speed and southpaw stance gave Mayweather for the first four rounds? Extrapolate that across 12 rounds and you have a picture of how the low-impact butt kicking from Whitaker would look.



OSCAR DE LA HOYA

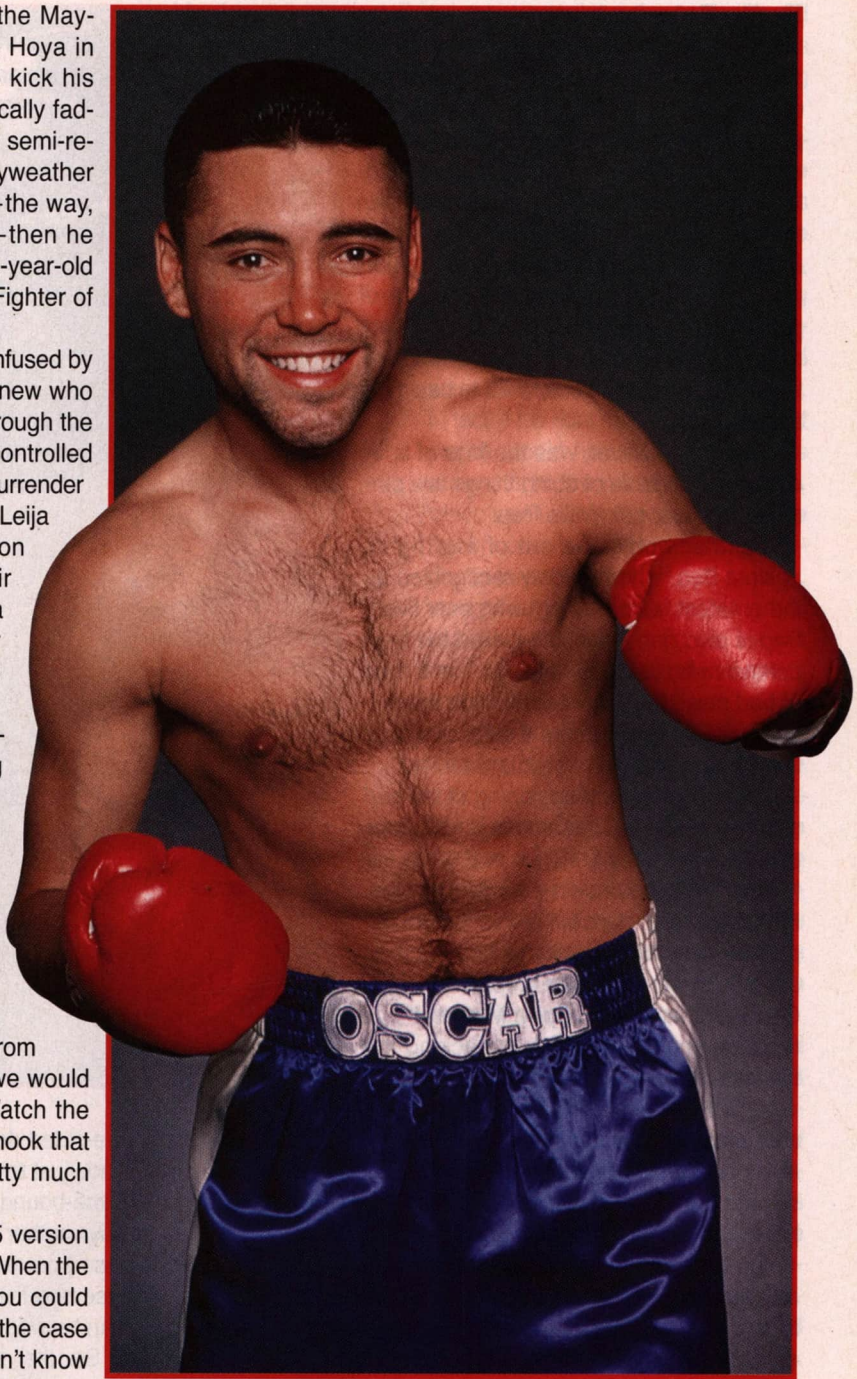
Record: 39-6 (30) Division vs. Mayweather: Lightweight

This is the one that's really going to get the Mayweather lovers riled up. "He beat De La Hoya in 2007! How can you pick De La Hoya to kick his butt?" Simple: Mayweather *barely* beat a physically fading 34-year-old version of De La Hoya who was semi-retired already, fighting once a year, if that. If Mayweather couldn't dominate that version of De La Hoya—the way, say, Manny Pacquiao did the following year—then he wouldn't stand much of a chance against the 22-year-old lightweight destroyer version who was named Fighter of the Year in 1995.

In '95, De La Hoya hadn't yet begun to get confused by going through a revolving door of trainers. He knew who he was stylistically. He was the guy who blew through the highly regarded Rafael Ruelas in two rounds, controlled and bloodied unbeaten Genaro Hernandez into surrender in six, and bludgeoned respected Jesse James Leija in two. Granted, none of those fighters were on Mayweather's level. But they were all in their primes. As was De La Hoya. The version of De La Hoya that Mayweather defeated—by just a point or two on most people's scorecards—was nowhere near his prime.

Even in 2007, as long as De La Hoya was jabbing, he was right in there with Money, fighting on even terms or better. That jab was also a key punch when "The Golden Boy" was a lightweight—he could use it either to measure his man while stepping backward or as a true offensive weapon. And it was accompanied by one of the quickest, sharpest left hooks in the sport. By 2007, De La Hoya's hook was only really useful against slower guys such as Ricardo Mayorga. The hooks Mayweather saw from De La Hoya in the ring were nothing like what we would have seen had they fought as lightweights. Watch the Ruelas fight again. If De La Hoya lands the left hook that dropped Ruelas early in the second round, pretty much any lightweight in history would hit the deck.

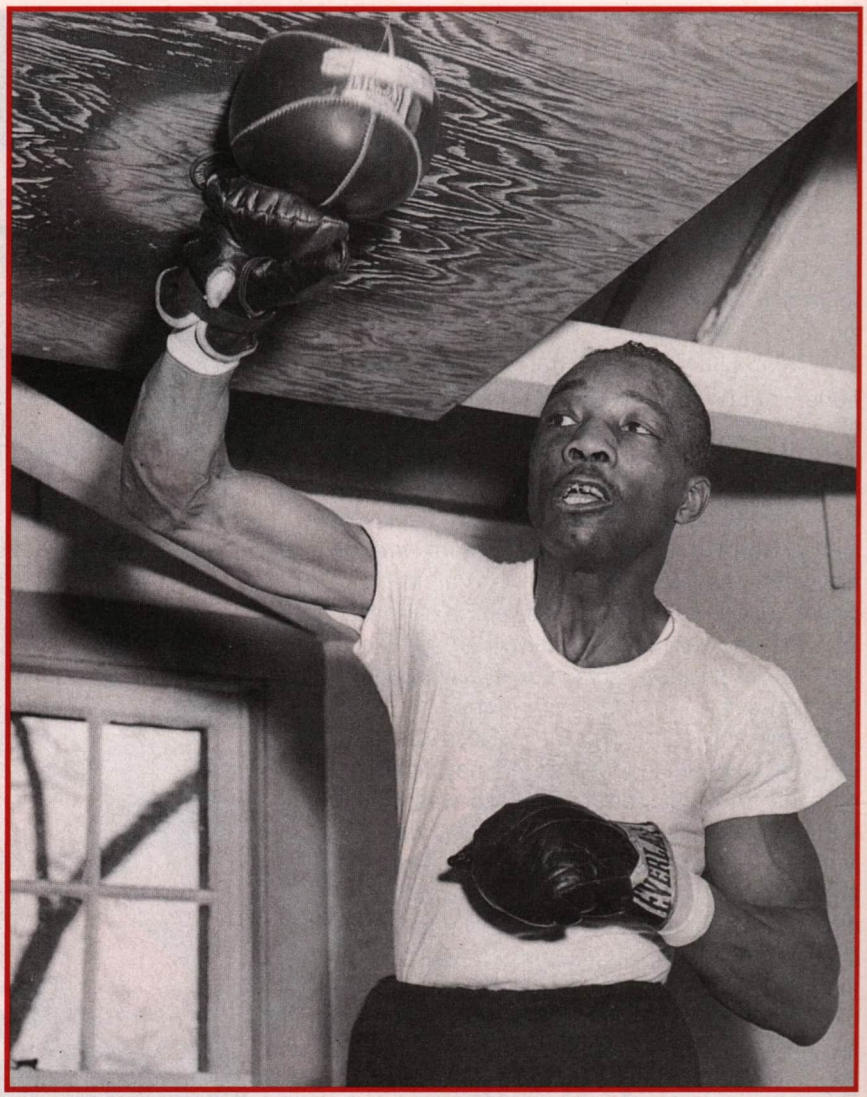
But the biggest difference between the 1995 version of Oscar and the 2007 version was confidence. When the 34-year-old De La Hoya fought Mayweather, you could tell he didn't fully believe in himself and, as was the case throughout the later stages of his career, he didn't know if he could fight hard for all 12 rounds. He just pressured Mayweather, used the jab well for the first eight rounds or so, and threw ineffective flurries along the ropes. It wasn't much, but it was almost enough to win the fight. And you're talking about a guy who was, at most, 75 percent of the fighter he'd been in his prime.



If it's lightweight vs. lightweight, De La Hoya wouldn't fade as badly, wouldn't stop jabbing, and would connect with some serious left hooks. Add a knockdown or two in his favor, subtract a couple of late rounds in which he had nothing left, re-tally the scorecards, and it's Oscar by a comfortable margin.

SANDY SADDLER

Record: 144-16-2 (103) Division vs. Mayweather: Junior Lightweight



We've finally arrived at the division in which Mayweather was truly at his best. No, he never ascended to the very top of the pound-for-pound ladder as a 130-pounder, but that was because the P-4-P lists tend to reward longevity. Still, in a pound-for-pound sense, the junior lightweight version of Mayweather was better than its lightweight, junior welterweight, and welterweight counterparts. And that means it isn't easy to find many fighters throughout the annals of history who would be solid bets to beat him at this weight.

Saddler, however, was the kind of special fighter capable of doing things few others could. Just ask Willie Pep.

Saddler won three out of four fights against Pep, who is widely recognized as the greatest featherweight who ever lived. Pep is also generally considered the best defensive boxer of all-time. So that's a bit of bad news for Mayweather, with the evidence suggesting that great defensive abilities weren't enough to stymie Saddler.

And that's just the beginning of the bad news for Money. Saddler was a ridiculous puncher, ranked by THE RING in 2003 as the fifth-best hitter, pound-for-pound, of all-time. His long, arcing right hand was flat-out explosive, and his left hook was almost as good. With the possible exception of Diego Corrales, there's nobody on Mayweather's resume who came close to packing the two-fisted power of Saddler.

And Saddler's ability to take a punch was just as extraordinary as his ability to deliver one. He was knocked out exactly once in 162 fights, and it happened in his second pro bout. Over his final 160 contests, you were hitting his chin in hopes of earning points, nothing more.

On top of all that, Saddler was as effective at fighting dirty as anyone this side of Fritzie Zivic. If the situation called for it, he'd use his head, shoulders, elbows, thumbs, or the heels of his gloves to inflict damage. We're not going to single out Mayweather as being susceptible to that sort of behavior; the reality is that *nobody* copes well with an opponent who fights that way.

It must be noted, however, that Saddler's resume at 130 pounds was limited. Whereas Mayweather dominated Genaro Hernandez to claim his junior lightweight belt and made eight one-sided defenses against mostly solid opposition, Saddler made just two defenses at the weight and wasn't facing Hall of Fame-bound adversaries. But just as we've said in defense of Mayweather in other divisions, these fights aren't won and lost based on resume. And there's no boxing historian out there asserting that Saddler was any less effective at 130 pounds than he was at 126.

Saddler was a vicious force that simply had too many weapons for Mayweather. Pretty Boy Floyd was magnificent at 130 pounds, which is why we'll be nice and say he could stand up to one of the biggest punchers ever and last the distance. But Saddler, who only ever lost one title fight (against Pep), wouldn't be denied. It would be Saddler on points, and it wouldn't be all that close.

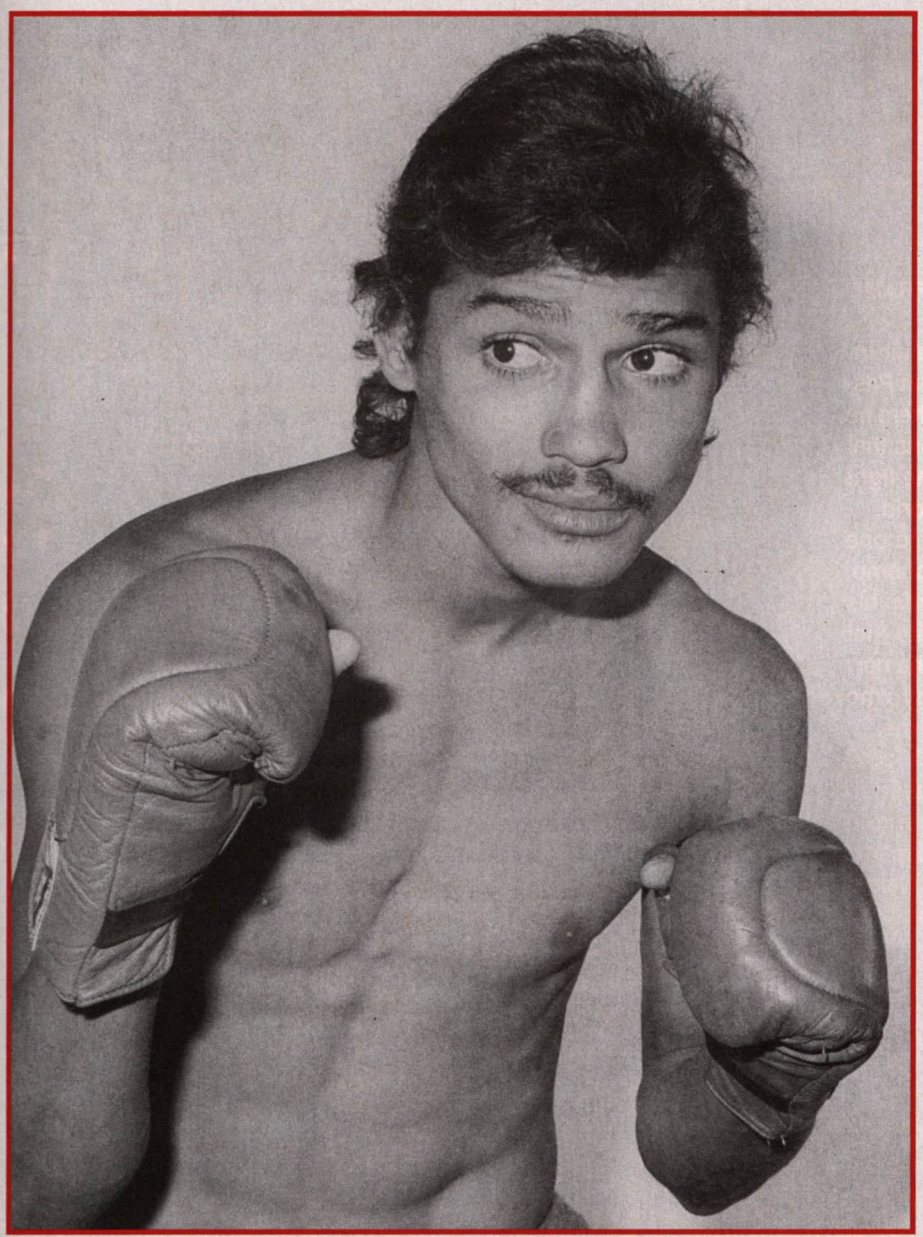
ALEXIS ARGUELLO

Record: 82-8 (65) Division vs. Mayweather: Junior Lightweight

Arguello is a mild boxing anomaly in that he wasn't necessarily at his very best in the first division that he ruled. That's not to say he wasn't a great featherweight. He most definitely was. But he was a more complete, mature fighter when he made the move to junior lightweight at age 25, and his resume there over the next three years was unassailable.

So what that means is that Arguello vs. Mayweather at 130 pounds would be prime against prime. And it would be one hell of an interesting fight, because Arguello had one clear weakness that Mayweather could take advantage of: "The Explosive Thin Man" wasn't very fast. Whether you're talking about hand speed or foot speed, Arguello was ordinary. And his defense was nothing to brag about either. That means that in a pure boxing match, he'd have his hands full with Mayweather.

However, Arguello's strengths far outnumbered his weaknesses (duh—he wouldn't be in the Hall of Fame otherwise). He was a versatile boxer-puncher who could identify his opponent's weaknesses and adjust his style mid-fight. He was one of the all-time great punchers and finishers; when an opening arrived, he rarely missed it. Arguello's best punch was his booming right hand, but he was also extremely dangerous with the left hook and wasn't shy about digging to the body. In fact, if his right cross wasn't his best punch, you'd have to say it was his uppercut to the pit of the stomach, which was usually the shot that set up the knockout. All of the punches Arguello threw were short and precise, straight out of the textbook. He was a technically outstanding fighter. He just wasn't blessed with exceptional speed and reflexes.



Take a close look at what the Nicaraguan did at 130 pounds. He knocked out Alfredo Escalera for the title. He kayoed Escalera again in the rematch. Then, in succession, he stopped Bazooka Limon, Bobby Chacon, and 46-0 Ruben Castillo. And he made four other defenses against less noteworthy opposition, three of which ended inside five rounds.

In the end, Arguello would find a way to beat Mayweather, but it wouldn't be easy. This would probably be the most dramatic bout of the 10 discussed in this article. Mayweather would most likely box his way to a lead. Arguello would have his moments, but entering the championship rounds, the speedy Mayweather would still be ahead. And then Arguello would find his opening. A bodyshot would freeze Mayweather, and a right to the jaw would render him unconscious.

Of all the ways the Mayweather haters want to see him get his butt kicked, this would be the most fun. ■

Now That Pascal Is World Champion ...

BUTE BONANZA LOOMS LARGER

By Nigel Collins
PHOTOS BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

As confetti and cheers filled the air inside Montreal's Bell Centre, Jean Pascal ran from corner to corner, where he climbed the ropes and saluted the fans that had roared him on to victory and the light heavyweight championship of the world.

HBO's Larry Merchant stood off to one side, waiting to interview the new champ, whose just-acquired RING belt hung from his neck, the final emblem of authenticity that gave him the right to declare, "I am the new king of the 175-pounders. Anybody who wants to be the best must challenge me."

If the ghost of George Dixon was looking on, he would have shook his head in amazement. Things sure have changed since 1890, when "Little Chocolate" became the first black world champion in any weight class and also the first ever Canadian-born champion.

Although Dixon turned pro in his hometown of Halifax, Nova Scotia, (also the birthplace of the great Sam Langford) and had a handful of bouts in Canada (including three in Montreal), he fought most of his Hall of Fame career in the United States and Europe. Pascal, a Haiti-born, nationalized Canadian citizen, had only to make a short commute from his home in suburban Laval

to downtown Montreal in order to reach the pinnacle of his profession and earn more money in one night than Dixon did in a career that spanned 150 professional fights (at least).

But despite the handsome payday and rapturous reception with which the 8,122 fans greeted Pascal's 11th-round technical decision over Chad Dawson, the new 175-pound champion is still struggling to catch up to Romanian transplant Lucian Bute, the city's biggest boxing star and undisputed box-office champ. If it had been Bute fighting Dawson, it would have been SRO at the Bell Centre.

"In Quebec, everybody loves Bute," a driver for Pascal's promoter, Group Yvon Michel, told THE RING. "Pascal, not so much. People think he's cocky."

It was, however, Pascal's irrepressible moxie that won the fight for him, the same moxie that made him laugh at Dawson's biceps at the weigh-in and then kiss his own. Beating the highly favored Dawson was a job for an audacious man, and Pascal proved up to the task.

"The win over Dawson absolutely boosted Pascal's popularity in Quebec," said Paul Salgado, THE RING's Canada correspondent. "His picture was plastered on the front page of *La Presse* and other newspapers the day after the fight. Montreal is a sports town and a fight town, so the fans are informed. They understood that, in Dawson, Pascal was not only facing the best fighter in the light

Pascal's aggression was not always effective, but he was much busier than Dawson and clearly caught the judges' eyes by being busier than his adversary. There was also a degree of intensity to his work that Dawson lacked.

When he let his hands go, Dawson landed some hard blows that rocked his Canadian opponent. Unfortunately for him, Dawson failed to mount the sort of sustained attack that was needed to take the play away from Pascal.

When Pascal stopped circling at long range and rushed to the attack, Dawson seldom fired back, choosing instead to clinch. Pascal, however, continued to hammer away in the trenches, taking every opportunity to impose his will.

heavyweight division, but also one of the most highly regarded fighters, pound-for-pound, in boxing."

In the province of Quebec, a potential Bute-Pascal fight is as big as Pacquiao-Mayweather would be to the rest of the world. According to Canadian boxing guru Russ Amber, a Bute-Pascal fight would be "the single biggest fight ever in Canadian history, even surpassing Sugar Ray Leonard and Roberto Duran."

And Amber said that *before* Pascal beat Dawson.

Bute campaigns at super middleweight, the division in which Pascal suffered his only pro loss, to Carl Froch. But with only seven pounds between them and so many millions to be made, weight certainly wouldn't be a deal-breaker.

"Pitting a popular Anglophone fighter against a popular Francophone fighter is the formula that has traditionally worked well in the province," said Salgado. "This is where Pascal-Bute is different. It is not a bout between two Canadian fighters with regional appeal. It is a fight between two world-class fighters, each at the very top of their respective division, whose careers have been successfully developed in Canada, which has never happened before.

"That is why Bute, who was sitting ringside, was so vocally supportive of Pascal when he was fighting Dawson. It wasn't simply a case of supporting the fighter from Montreal. Bute understood the enormous amount of money that could be made fighting Pascal in Canada if he beat Dawson."

Some will say Pascal, 26-1 (16), caught Dawson, 29-1 (17), at the right time, and they might be correct. But catch him he did, and it was no accident. Pascal and his trainer, Marc Ramsay, developed a simple but effective battle plan that featured constant lateral movement and darting attacks. The weapon of choice was the right hand, historically the most reliable punch against southpaws, and Pascal used it to considerable effect throughout the contest.

An Inconclusive Conclusion

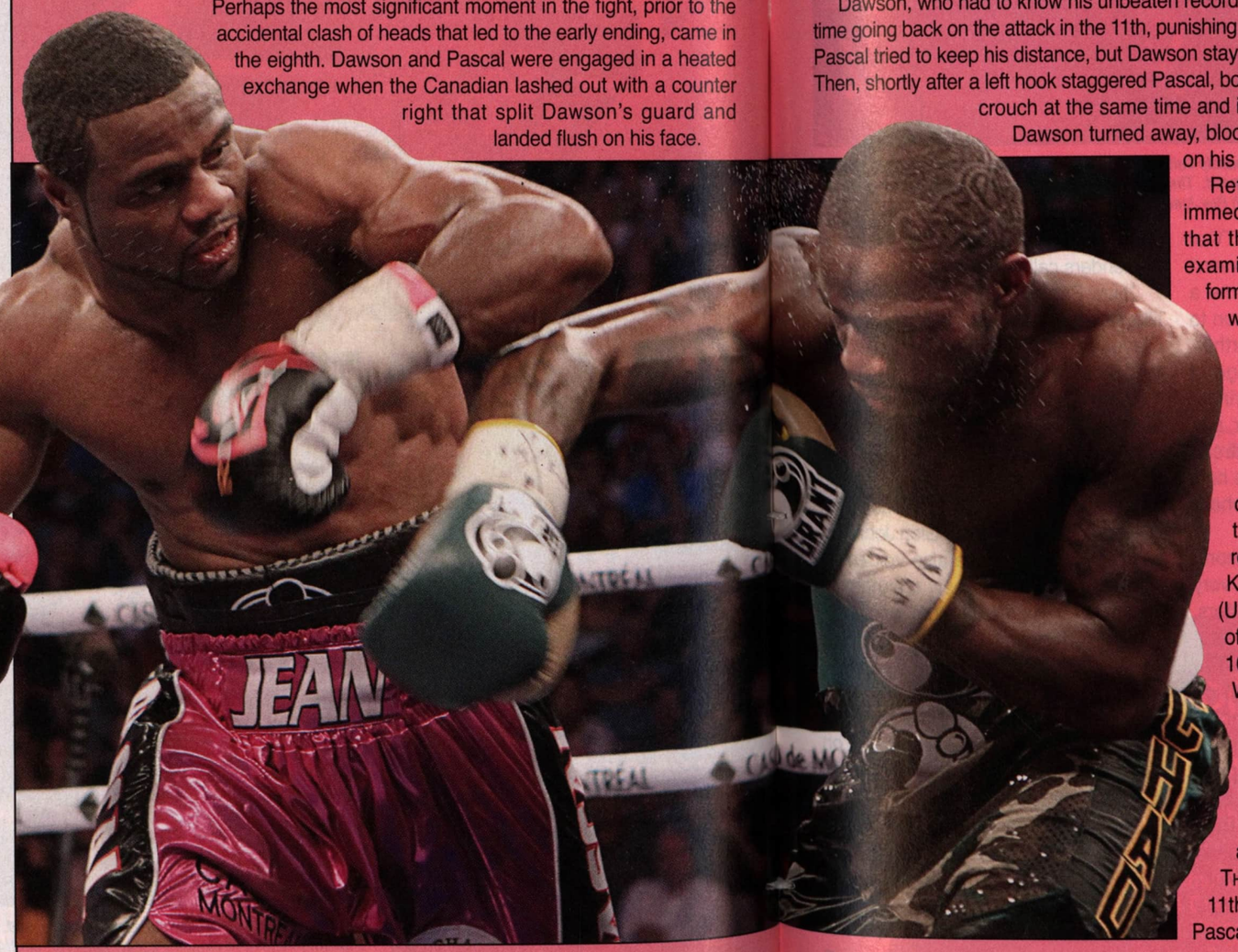
You knew before the first round of the Chad Dawson-Jean Pascal bout was over that it was going to be a difficult fight to score—lots of motion, lots of feints, lots of missed and blocked punches. Even the cheers of the pro-Pascal crowd couldn't camouflage the lack of effective punching in the early rounds.

But Pascal, 174¼, had two things going for him that Dawson lacked—enthusiasm and a well-considered fight plan. Even when his punches fell short of the mark, the local hero *seemed* to be doing more. Dawson, 174, was flat and, at times, appeared disinterested.

Pascal's speed of foot and unpredictable movement made him a much more difficult target than recent Dawson opponents, such as Glen Johnson and Antonio Tarver. And when the opportunity came, the Canadian would suddenly leap to the attack with a swarming flurry and then escape before Dawson could retaliate. It was at these junctures that Pascal scored with right hands to both the head and body.

Dawson, New Haven, Connecticut, appeared to wake up in the fourth, when he scored with a solid right early and held his own in a brisk exchange right before the bell. He also avoided most of Pascal's helter-skelter bull rushes in the fifth, while landing a handful of clean punches of his own.

Perhaps the most significant moment in the fight, prior to the accidental clash of heads that led to the early ending, came in the eighth. Dawson and Pascal were engaged in a heated exchange when the Canadian lashed out with a counter right that split Dawson's guard and landed flush on his face.

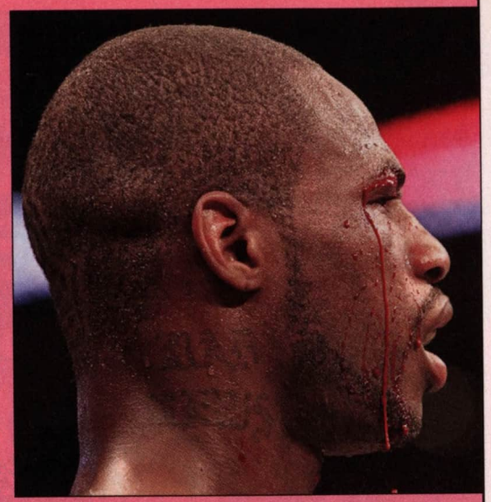


Pascal seemed to want it more

Dawson wobbled back, and Pascal charged forward in an attempt to capitalize. But Dawson grabbed and spoiled his way to the bell, and the moment passed.

Dawson, 28, had an excellent comeback round in the ninth, staggering Pascal, 27, with a volley of punches. It was his best rally so far, but, just when Pascal looked the most vulnerable, Dawson inexplicably stopped punching.

Pascal edged the 10th with an early body barrage and a solid right to the head shortly before the bell, but his offensive spurts were decreasing and he appeared to be getting tired.



Dawson wanted to continue, but the doctor said "no"

Dawson, who had to know his unbeaten record was slipping away, wasted no time going back on the attack in the 11th, punishing Pascal with accurate punches. Pascal tried to keep his distance, but Dawson stayed on him, firing fast and hard. Then, shortly after a left hook staggered Pascal, both fighters came out of a semi-crouch at the same time and inadvertently smacked heads.

Dawson turned away, blood streaming from a laceration on his right eyelid.

Referee Mike Griffin (Canada) immediately stopped the action so that the ringside physician could examine the wound and then informed the commission that the cut was the result of an accidental headbutt. The doctor ruled that the injury was too serious for the bout to continue, and the fight was terminated at the 2:06 mark.

The official judges, who, under WBC rules were obligated to score the incomplete 11th round, all voted for Pascal. John Keane (UK) and Gerald Ritter (USA) were well within the bounds of reason with identical scores of 106-103. Canadian judge Jack Woodburn, however, handed in a mystifying 108-101 tally for Pascal. Woodburn even gave the 11th round to his fellow Canadian, which even the new champ's strongest advocates knew was rubbish. The Ring, which also scored the 11th round for clarity's sake, had Pascal ahead, 106-104.

—N.C.

"They said there was no blueprint, no solution to beat Chad Dawson," bragged Pascal at the postfight press conference. "Tonight I proved I was the blueprint. I was the solution."

"We stayed exactly on the plan throughout the fight," echoed Ramsay. "We worked four months on this fight, and tonight we executed perfectly. You've seen other fighters just try to pressure him, and nobody has ever beaten him that way."

Cocky *and* disciplined: not a bad formula for success in any endeavor. How far these qualities, along with an abundance of athletic ability and fighting spirit, will take Pascal remains to be seen. There are still question marks, some of which arose out of the less-than-totally-satisfying way he won the title.

It's not like Pascal splattered Dawson for the 10-count—or any count for that matter. Moreover, the accidental clash of heads that ended the bout came at a point when Dawson was staging a last-ditch effort and had Pascal rattled and under heavy fire.

Nobody knows what would have happened if the headbutt had not occurred when it did, and, while the timing certainly favored Pascal, replays showed that it was not a premeditated foul as Dawson's promoter, Gary Shaw, claimed.

"Boxing is like going to war," said Pascal. "You never know what will happen. But one thing I know: I am not a dirty fighter."

Dawson wasn't buying it.

"I had knots all over my face from headbutts," he complained. "He butted me five or six times, but the referee [Mike Griffin] didn't do anything."

Nevertheless, the downcast Dawson seemed to take solace in the fact that Pascal is contractually bound to give him a rematch. But he's going to have to wait, because the agreement allows Pascal to take another fight first. In the meantime, the last thing Dawson needs to do is sit around feeling sorry for himself.

There were times in the bout when it seemed that the American could have taken over the fight with a more concerted effort, but he lacked either the conditioning or willpower to do so. One can only assume the tangle of personal problems that beset him had at least some bearing on Dawson's sad-sack

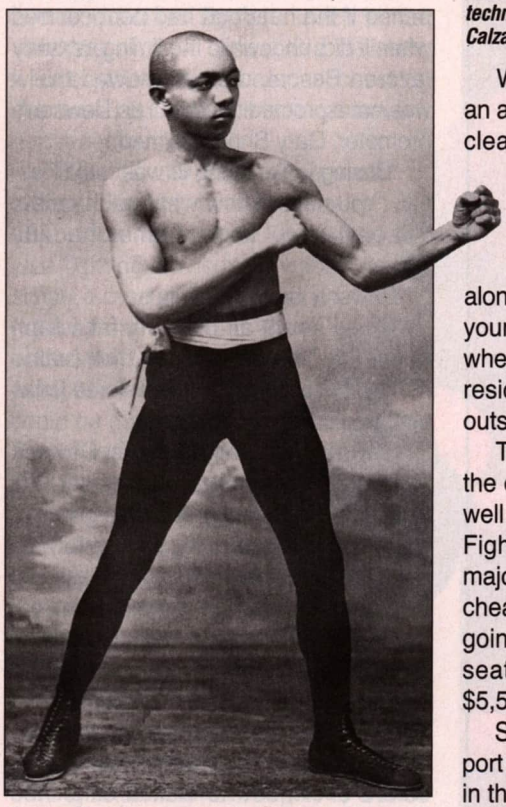
performance. He is at odds with co-managers Mike Crisco and Jay Prince, as well as promoter Shaw—all of whom are in for a cut of the money whenever he fights. It sucks, but the only way out is to fight, and approaching it halfheartedly won't work.

The loss to Pascal wasn't the kind of beating that physically ruins a boxer, not even remotely close. The worst part was that Dawson's spirit seemed broken before the fight started. Maybe trusted trainer Eddie Mustafa Muhammad can help him out of his funk. Maybe not. But regardless of what happens in the future, a reevaluation of Dawson has already begun. How he responds to the challenge ahead will be pivotal.

Pascal is on the happy side of the cycle, still ascending, his future, at least for the immediate future, secure. Beyond the obvious allure of a fight with Bute, there are other options.

"I'm going to invade America," he told the media in a burst of spontaneous postfight enthusiasm. "I'm going to be unstoppable."

Pascal receives his RING magazine championship belt from Editor-in-Chief Nigel Collins moments after the technical decision in his favor was announced. The light heavyweight title had been vacant since Joe Calzaghe retired following his 2008 bout with Roy Jones.



George Dixon was not only the first Canadian to win a world championship; he was also the first black man to win a world championship in any weight class. More than 100 years later, Pascal has become Canada's second black world champion.

Whether the invasion will be via TV or an actual fight south of the border wasn't clear, but Pascal has already come a long way and has every reason to believe he can go even further. His journey began at the age of four, when he left Port-au-Prince, along with his mother, older brother, and younger sister. They came to Montreal, where more than 100,000 Haitians now reside, the largest gathering anywhere outside of Haiti.

The scarcity of black faces among the crowd at the Bell Centre could very well be attributable to economic factors. Fight night in Montreal is treated as a major event and priced accordingly. The cheapest seats were $75, with ringside going for $500. There were also tables seating five for $2,000 and eight for $5,500, all of which appeared occupied.

Still, even without ticket-buying support from the Haitian community or Bute in the opposite corner, Pascal has been a significant part of the flourishing Montreal scene for some time, and his role is rapidly increasing with every victory. A sure sign of his new status on the international stage is the growing number of contenders calling him out.

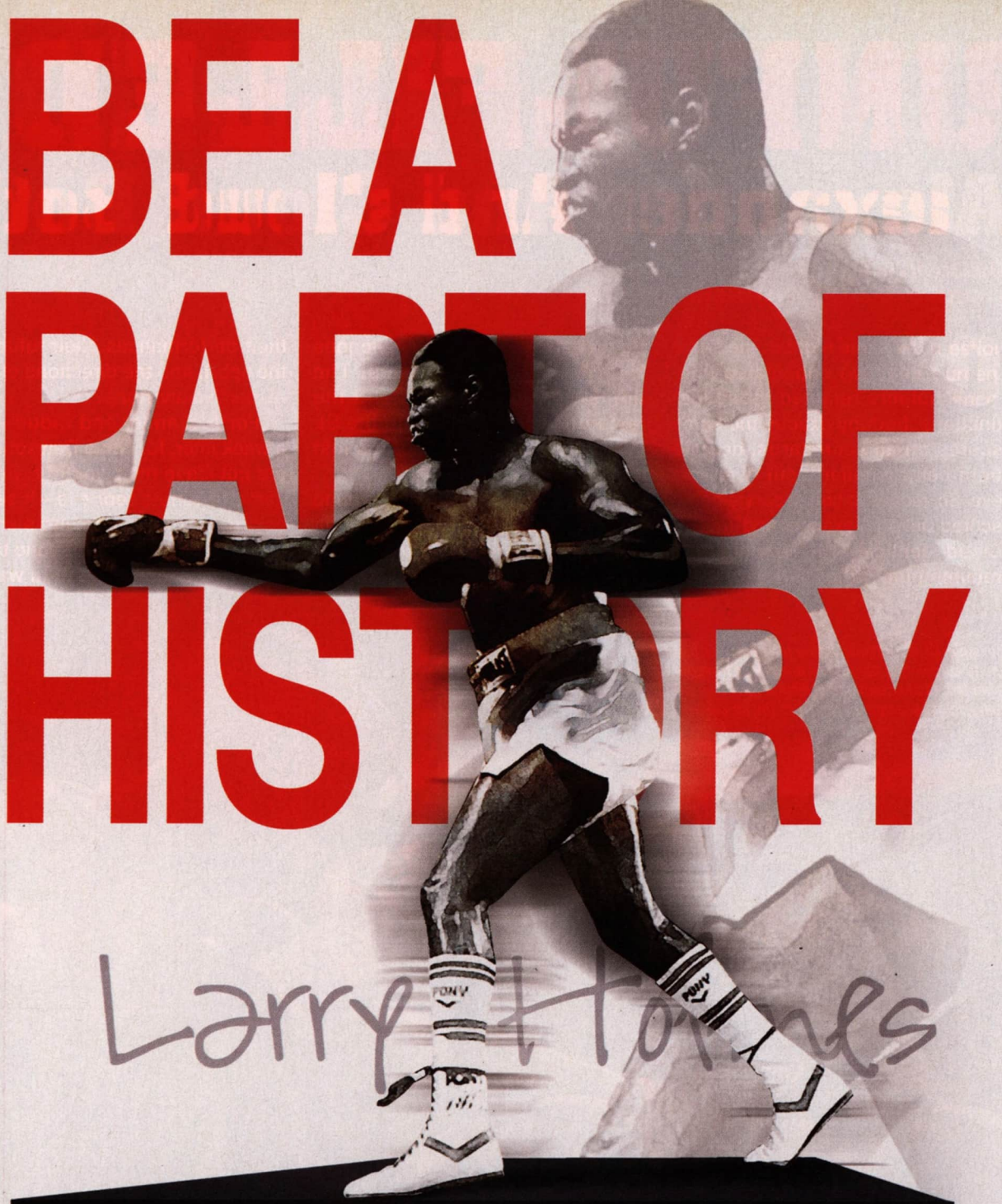
"Now Pascal has THE RING magazine title, he's the man I want to beat," Nathan Cleverly, THE RING's number-eight contender, told the BBC.

First, Cleverly has to get past Karo Murat (currently ranked sixth) in September, but the Welshman is not the only would-be-king jockeying for position. American contender Tavoris Cloud, fresh from a win over ex-champ Glen Johnson, and old foe Froch have also voiced an interest in testing the new champion's mettle—and the payday that would accompany the opportunity.

George Dixon blazed a trail for black Canadian fighters more than a 100 years ago, winning both the bantamweight and featherweight world championships on his way to Canastota. But he had to leave home to do it.

In terms of popularity and the ability to sell tickets, light heavyweight champion Pascal is still number two in his hometown of Montreal, but, these days there's no other city in the world were that designation means quite so much. ■

BE A PART OF HISTORY



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UNFULFILLED

Alexander And Cloud Both

By David Mayo

PHOTOS BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

On the same night in the same arena, two undefeated titleholders retained those distinctions, both by exactly the same scores on all scorecards, despite both being similarly cut over one eye. Six judges in two separate bouts scored Devon Alexander and Tavoris Cloud identical 116-112 winners in retaining their titles, 8-4 in rounds. Both turned back stern challenges from world-class veterans. The fights were entertaining and the featured titlists exited into the St. Louis night with their records just as unmarred.

So why did it seem the two young guns, Alexander at junior welterweight and Cloud at light heavyweight, left so many people dissatisfied with their performances, their futures in the sport, and the directions of their respective divisions?

For Alexander and Cloud—and, a week later, for Chad Dawson, who did not leave his own fight with the same fortunate reprieve—it served as a case study in boxing's unique propensity for defining young talent, nurturing it long enough to warrant

Alexander drills Kotelnik with a jab (left), but had far more difficulty outpointing the former titleholder from the Ukraine than expected. Cloud experienced similar problems with former light heavyweight champion Johnson in the co-feature (right).

EXPECTATIONS

Win But Fail To Impress

real challenges, then judging it based not only upon success or failure, but upon the quality of victory.

They won. But in the aftermath, both Alexander and Cloud seemed to sense the undercurrent of concern that their lofty expectations had met with uncertain feedback.

That was particularly true of Alexander, who in his press conference after defeating Andeas Kotelnik gave himself only a "C-minus" for his 12-round decision victory. Within a few days, Alexander conceded even more ground on his self-imposed grade.

"It was probably a D-minus performance," Alexander said. "I wasn't at my best, but I pulled out the victory and I got the job done. That's all that matters."

Cloud faced even more questions, although he didn't bear the burden of pleasing the hometown audience in the same fashion as the St. Louis-born Alexander. What Cloud did face were ample questions about why 41-year-old Glen Johnson was able to run so many cute-but-familiar tactics with so little response from him. Why was Johnson able to smother Cloud so

effectively early in the fight? Why was he able to withstand a couple of noticeable instances when Cloud hurt him? Why were his pitty-pat taps in the ninth round so effective, as Cloud turned into a spectator against flurries that barely would have rocked a child's punching clown?

Cloud, like Alexander, quickly sought to assuage the concerns of the masses by calling for the most attractive possible fight. For Cloud, that meant either a showdown with the aged veteran Bernard Hopkins or the much younger Jean Pascal, who defeated the previously unbeaten Dawson just one week after Cloud's August 7 victory.

"I'd fight Pascal in Montreal if he wants the fight," Cloud said. "I'm not at all surprised he beat Dawson. I say that because he's got a style like mine and his body's a lot like mine. I already know I can beat Dawson. So if Pascal is ready for another unification fight, let's make it."

Whether the once-beaten Pascal prefers to face Cloud rather than pursue a red-hot fight in Montreal against undefeated fellow Quebec resident Lucian Bute remains to be seen. So does the issue of where these young, undefeated fighters go from here.

The lackluster wins by Alexander and Cloud, followed in short order by Dawson's clear-cut loss to Pascal in a fight which ended in an 11th-round technical decision, left all three of the favorites with huge gashes over their eyes—and their reputations. Surely, Alexander and Cloud can shed any negative connotations of their victories with the passage of time and more satisfactory performances, assuming both have the latter in their makeup. But in an era when boxing is practically devoid of heavyweights and the most marketable fighters are all on the wrong side of 30, the sport seeks new star power. Some of those hopes fell upon a pair of titleholders on the same card in St. Louis, who left observers wondering whether Cloud possesses the capacity to enforce his game plan upon a reluctant opponent, whether Alexander is much more than a southpaw cutie-pie in the mold of deposed St. Louis title claimant Cory Spinks (who lost to Cornelius Bundrage on the same card), and whether it's even possible that both men's best attributes are their athleticism and work rates, traits that tend to warp and shrivel over time.

If the latter is true, neither Alexander nor Cloud figures to have a career as lengthy as the crafty opponent across the ring from him before a crowd of 9,117 at the Scottrade Center.

In fact, the biggest winner of the night didn't wear gloves at all. Promoter Don King, whose career has seemed on the ropes in recent years, ended up with a pair of interesting victories for his fighters, a loss for the shopworn Spinks which certainly didn't hurt his feelings any, and Floyd Mayweather sitting beside him as part of a marathon effort to bring the superstar into his fold and make one more fistic windfall by negotiating a Mayweather-Manny Pacquiao fight where other efforts failed.

Kotelnik's boxing skills and experience at a world-class level enabled him to come close to upsetting Alexander. The fact that Amir Khan had breezed to a dominating decision over Kotelnik earlier this year made Alexander's performance look even worse by comparison.

At times, the wily Johnson befuddled Cloud with his boxing skills and relentless pressure. Fortunately for Cloud, the 41-year-old "Road Warrior" doesn't have as much zip on his punches as he used to, which allowed the younger man to prevail in a taxing encounter.

Meantime, if one were forced to designate either Alexander or Cloud as the bigger disappointment, it had to be the 23-year-old Alexander, simply because of the promise he displayed in dominating Junior Witter to win the title and then in overwhelming Juan Urango with a scintillating knockout in a close fight.

Alexander, 21-0 (13), was the subject of a fight-week cover story in *The New York Times* and fights in the jam-packed division at 140 pounds, where a host of savvy veterans lend support to three youngsters (Alexander, Timothy Bradley and Amir Khan) simultaneously occupying the top rungs of the division and its hopes for the future. He also was the focal point of the promotion. So when a palpable look of relief overtook Alexander's face after the decision was announced, it hardly constituted the type of conclusion anyone expected.

Kotelnik, 31-4-1 (13), a former titleholder and 2000 Olympic silver medalist, provided plenty in the way of teaching tools. The 32-year-old Ukrainian started the fight in a defensive posture, hands high, his balance often centered over his back leg, showing no signs of a 13-month layoff. When Kotelnik quickly discovered he could press the fight without fear of being hurt, he took the offensive, landed lead rights, which opened up other punching options, and worked well inside. CompuBox statistics actually had Kotelnik landing more total punches, 225 to 202, while Alexander needed reminders from his corner that failure to retreat on angles left him susceptible to the tail end of punches.

Alexander won because he was quicker, his work output was both impressive and effective, and he landed more power shots. But with his primary opposition watching closely, he did little to inspire fear from Bradley or Khan, the latter of whom defeated Kotelnik much more easily last year.

"A lot of people are going to be eyeing me now," Alexander said.

"A lot of people will think that wasn't so good of a performance. But I think, for me, people have got high expectations. They want me to look good every time.

"There was some pressure I wasn't used to, fighting at home, on HBO, in a main event, in my hometown—all the stars, the lights. But I'm past that now. I've done that. I'm glad I got the experience. I won't feel that pressure anymore, and I'm ready to go on to bigger things."

In fact, Alexander acknowledged that the hometown drama caused him to "get lured in" to a fight he didn't necessarily want. "By listening to the crowd and not paying attention to your opponent, that's how you can get out of your game plan," he said.

Alexander's initial effort to shift focus away from the Kotelnik bout was to call out Bradley. HBO openly covets an Alexander-Bradley unification the week before the Super Bowl, although Gary Shaw, who promotes the 27-year-old Bradley, had suggested it might be better to let the proposed clash of youngsters simmer. Nonetheless, Shaw seemed more open to the idea after seeing Alexander-Kotelnik.

"Kotelnik got to Alexander, and I mean a lot," Shaw said. "They have to be surprised how much Alexander got hit. And if Kotelnik can hit him like that, I know Timothy Bradley can hit him and hurt him. We're not going to St. Louis for the fight, but, otherwise, I'd say

there's a very good chance we can get that fight made."

Kevin Cunningham, who trains Alexander, was not surprised by Shaw's change of heart. He suggested Alexander's performance was just the kind that can "cloud your judgment" and prompt managers and promoters to become mistakenly emboldened about any particular matchup.

"Obviously Devon didn't have one of his better nights," Cunningham said. "But boxing is a battle of wills, and Devon doesn't lack for will. You don't always have a real good night, and things don't always go according to plan. You get cut. You get a good opponent. You get the crowd involved, and they can all have an effect. But that's when you've got to find a way to will yourself to a win. That's what champions do. That's what Devon did, and I'm proud of him.

"Devon and Bradley is the fight people want to see. That's the fight we want to make. Bradley's people haven't seemed very excited about it, but maybe seeing Devon get hit a little bit gave them some courage. I hope we can get that fight made."

Cloud's future seemed somewhat murkier than Alexander's. For one, the light heavyweight division isn't nearly as compelling as the junior welterweights. And Cloud, at 28, also has less time than Alexander to disprove the merits of his lukewarm victory over the 41-year-old Johnson, 50-14-2 (34), who was hurt in the fifth and sixth rounds and withstood an extensive barrage early in the eighth, only to recuperate and answer each time.

Johnson is troublesome for anyone. But Cloud, 21-0 (18), followed a similar path in his victory over Clinton Woods, when he wasn't skillful enough to impose his fight plan upon his opponent. In the 12th round, Johnson was the busier fighter, the one digging punches and seeking a conclusive ending to a close fight, which is exactly the posture one might expect to see from the younger man.

Judges saw through the batches of meaningless and missed punches by Johnson, who threw 883 to Cloud's 682, and correctly scored in favor of the man throwing the sharper, heavier punches. But that didn't allay concerns about the veritable absence of combination punching by Cloud, who also explained that he didn't attack when Johnson was hurt because, in similar instances, he has been "wild-looking" when trying to finish past opponents.

Alexander suffered a cut over his right eye in the Kotelnik fight, which hampered him to a degree. If nothing else, the undefeated St. Louis fighter showed that he could overcome adversity.

Both men have time. To their credit, Alexander and Cloud didn't suffer the ignominy of their first defeat, as Dawson did a week later. If the adage holds true that you don't know what kind of fighter a man is until he has to bounce back from defeat, then we will learn quickly about Dawson.

To some degree, we will learn something about Alexander and Cloud too. Both were in close fights, both protected their undefeated records, and both survived veterans who are unafraid of a scrap. And both demonstrated that they have plenty of work to do in understanding how to affect ebb and flow when confronted with someone so knowledgeable.

"I don't know it all," Alexander said. "That's the thing about me, I'm still willing to learn. I did some things wrong in the fight, and I was getting hit. I was getting hit like I don't normally get hit because I wanted to bang with the guy instead of boxing with him. I wasn't listening to my trainer. But I learned from it.

"You have to be versatile. You can't have just one style and that's it. You've got to be smart in the ring. You've got to be able to pull it out in the later rounds. This is definitely a learning experience. I got it out of my system. I've been in a main event, on HBO, in my hometown. The pressure of that is gone. I've done it now. I'll go back, watch the tape, and move on. I'm ready to take on the world." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for The Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to THE RING.

Ultimately, it was Cloud's harder punches that allowed him to get past the always-tough Johnson. But like Alexander, he was expected to dominate his older, slower opponent to a greater degree than he did.

In the end, Don King was the biggest winner. Both Alexander and Cloud (sporting a lumpy left eye) are still undefeated and will get additional opportunities to reach their full potential under King's promotional banner.

Andre Ward

"I'm A Perfectionist"

As we approach Stage Three of Showtime's "Super Six" tournament, one face has emerged, and it's the face of a fighter not many thought would be in the running at the end—Andre Ward.

The super middleweight round robin has been Ward's coming-out party. Olympic success in 2004 certainly didn't gain the Oakland, California, resident the kind of crossover appeal it had previous American Olympic gold medal winners. Therefore, Ward seized the Super Six opportunity by the scruff of the neck and has become the favorite to win it all.

It's taken some time for Ward, 22-0 (13), to reach his current status, and he's showing signs, by easily decisioning Allan Green in his last outing and dominating Mikkel Kessler in his Super Six debut, that he could eventually be on that rarified plateau where Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather currently reside. But you'd never hear Ward say it. Bragging is not his style.

"I just have to keep working and keep it moving," Ward said. "I hear all the things being said about me, like I'm supposed to be this and I'm supposed to be that. But I still have a tendency to look more at what I haven't done than anything I have done. In my opinion, I haven't done anything yet."

When RING managing editor Joseph Santoliquito spoke with the 26-year-old WBA super middleweight titlist, he was training for the third stage of the Super Six against former '04 Olympic teammate and friend, Andre Dirrell. The fight was originally scheduled for September 25, but has since been postponed. When Ward graciously took time away from his rigorous training schedule to speak to THE RING, his wife Tiffiney and trainer Virgil Hunter accompanied him. Santoliquito reports:

"You can't help but be impressed by Andre when you meet him. He has a very funny side and carries a confidence in a very grounded way. What you also can't help but sense is that he possesses a unique quality that attracts people to him. He's a genuine guy that could be a breath of fresh air as a future superstar in a sport that badly needs as many Andre Wards as possible. He's extremely approachable and down to earth. It's almost as if Ward is the anti-Floyd Mayweather. A humble young fighter who could very well be the future of the sport."

The Ring: What was life like for you growing up in Oakland?

Andre Ward: I grew up most of my life in Hayward, California. My father, Frank, was a single dad, and I'd say I had a really good life. I had struggles, like every other kid being raised by a single parent. My father instilled in me what it was like to be a man, and I had a great example. I always used to question why my father was so hard on my brother and me when we were growing up. Obviously, I know why now *(laughs)*.

My father died in 2006 from heart disease and there are still a few stones unturned when it comes to his death. It was tough to see him sick. The last tournament I fought before he died was in Reno, and I drew Curtis Stevens. My father dropped everything he was doing to get there, and he brought Tiffiney, my girlfriend, who was to become my wife. The next week after that, he died. It was sudden. I had no time to prepare for it. The mystery of it is that he went to a hospital in Reno, and I didn't know what for. Looking back at the photos, he looked sick in his face. But at the time, I didn't know anything. We found out later that his heart was so bad that he would have been on a transplant list. It is still somewhat of a mystery if my dad knew he was *that* sick or if he did and kept it from me.

The Ring: How hard did it hit you?

AW: Pretty hard. My father had his own glass business. He was a hard-working man who everyone in our area knew. We used to have this big truck he called "Big Red." He was a man with a blue-collar mentality—plus he was raising two children by himself. *That's a real man.* It's hard for a mother or a father to raise two young men by themselves. When he was snatched away from me, I couldn't prepare for it mentally or emotionally. I couldn't understand it. I wanted answers, and it shook my relationship with God. I was fighting to live right. That really set me back for several years. That's when I had my teenage past, getting into trouble.

The Ring: What kind of trouble?

AW: I was dibbling and dabbling, getting into a little of this and that. My father was strict, and we had a disciplined lifestyle growing up. We went to school and went to the gym. That was it. Disciplined. Then curiosity took over. I started going to par-

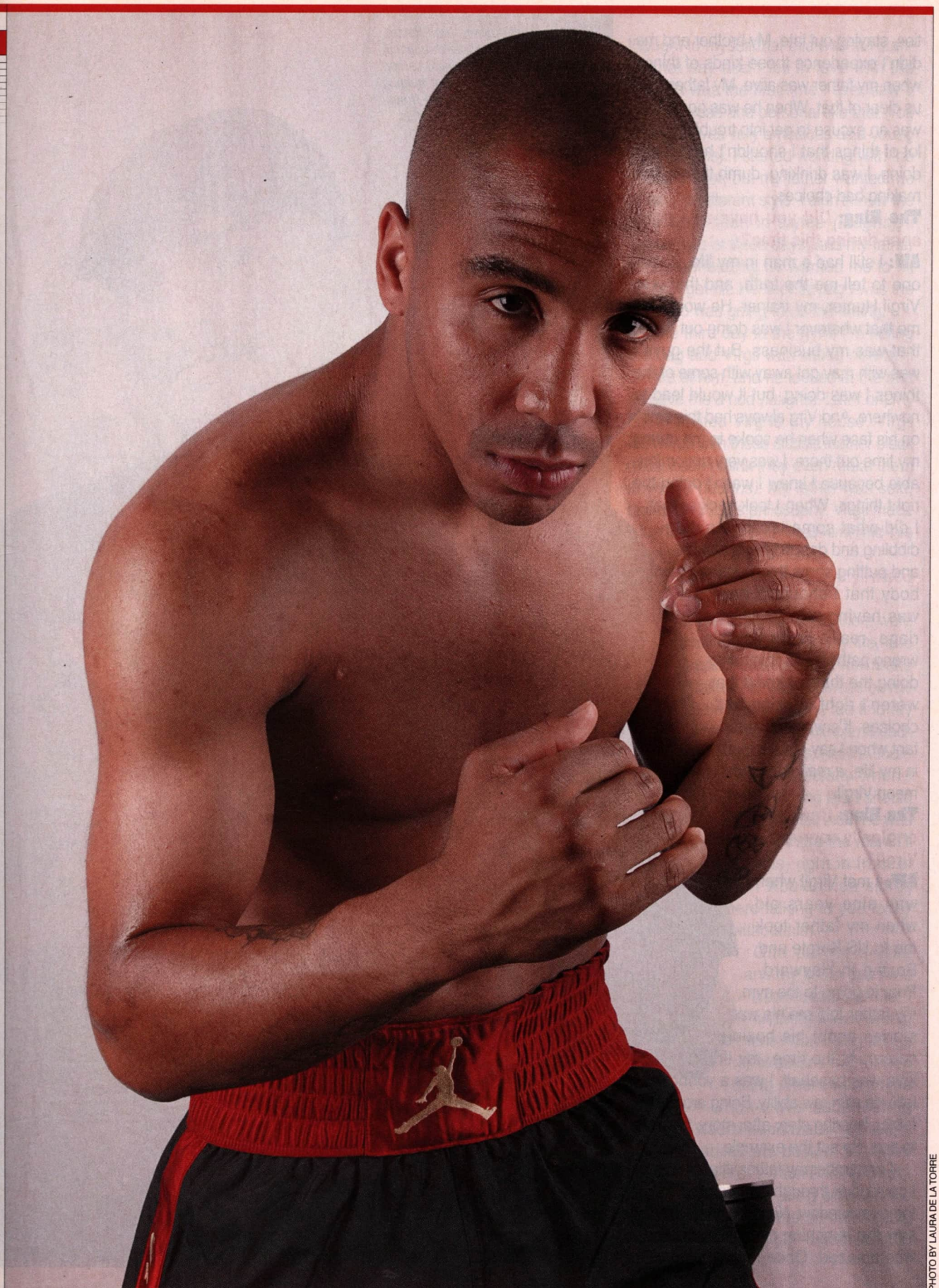


PHOTO BY LAURA DE LA TORRE

ties, staying out late. My brother and me didn't experience those kinds of things when my father was alive. My father kept us clear of that. When he was gone, that was an excuse to get into trouble. I did a lot of things that I shouldn't have been doing. I was drinking, dumb things, just making bad choices.

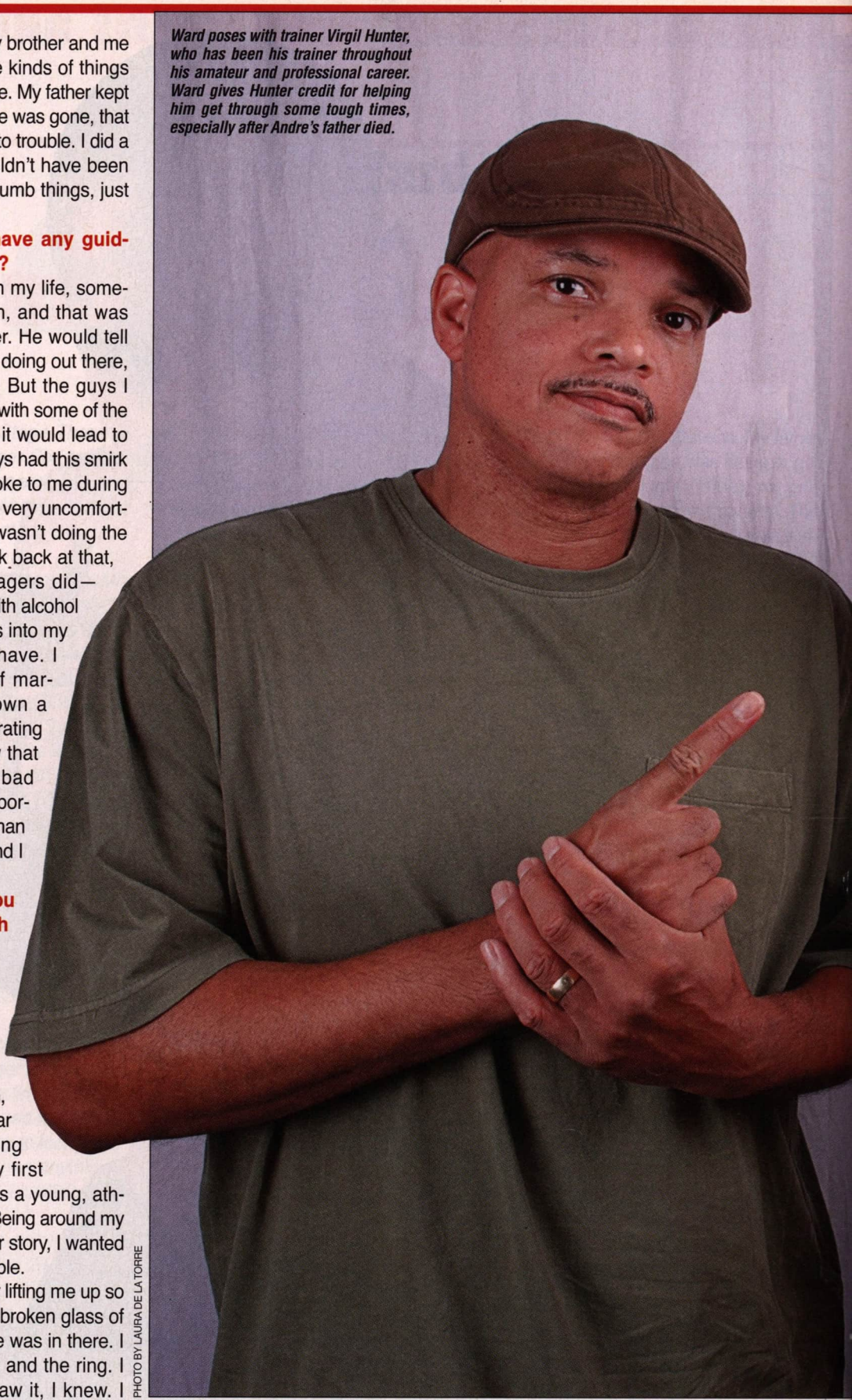
The Ring: Did you have any guidance during this time?

AW: I still had a man in my life, someone to tell me the truth, and that was Virgil Hunter, my trainer. He would tell me that whatever I was doing out there, that was my business. But the guys I was with may get away with some of the things I was doing, but it would lead to nowhere. And Virg always had this smirk on his face when he spoke to me during my time out there. I was very uncomfortable because I knew I wasn't doing the right things. When I look back at that, I did what some teenagers did—dibbling and dabbling with alcohol and putting some things into my body that I shouldn't have. I was having sex out of marriage, really going down a wrong path. It was frustrating doing the things I knew that weren't right, making bad choices. It's why it's important when I say I had a man in my life, *a real man*, and I mean Virgil.

The Ring: How did you originally connect with Virgil?

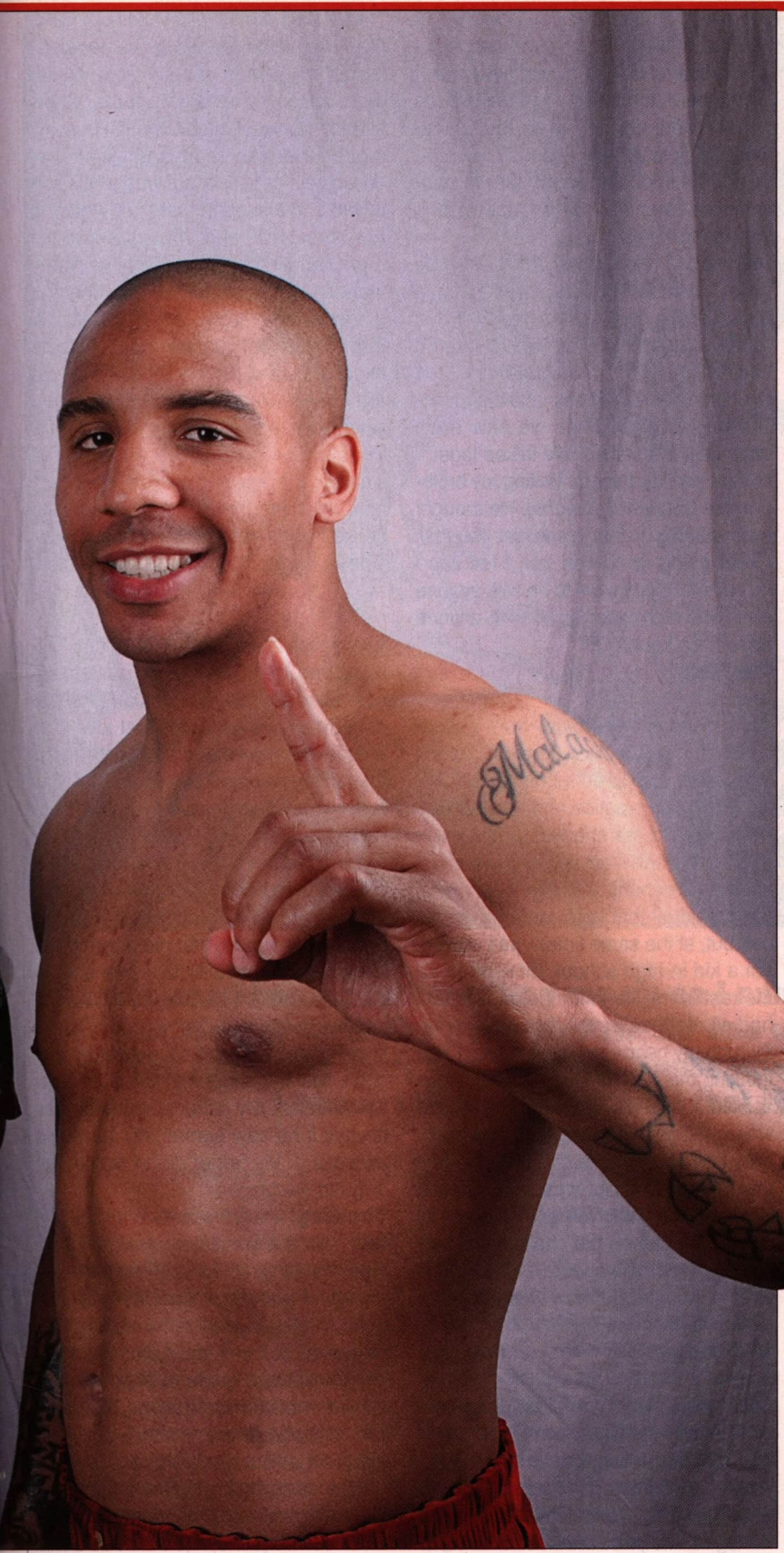
AW: I met Virgil when I was nine years old, when my father took me to US Karate and Boxing in Hayward. Prior to going to the gym, my father told me his war stories about his boxing career. At the time, my first love was baseball. I was a young, athletic kid with raw ability. Being around my father, hearing story after story, I wanted to box. He set the example.

I remember my father lifting me up so I could look through the broken glass of the gym window. No one was in there. I saw the punching bags and the ring. I was amazed. Once I saw it, I knew. I



Ward poses with trainer Virgil Hunter, who has been his trainer throughout his amateur and professional career. Ward gives Hunter credit for helping him get through some tough times, especially after Andre's father died.

PHOTO BY LAURA DE LA TORRE



thought to myself that this was *it*. I started that day and I fell in love with the sport. It was the first time I ever saw a gym up close and personal like that. You can say I was very ambitious as a young man *(laughs)*. I started working with the house trainer, but my father wanted me to learn a different style. I didn't know the difference then in styles *(laughs)*. I trained two or three days, and my father kept emphasizing he wanted me to hit and not get hit. He kept saying I was the one who was going to do the hitting.

The third day in the gym, I'm hitting the bag and Virgil was sitting nearby. I looked at him, and he looked at me and he gave me a nod *(laughs)*. Later on, my father invited Virg to my house. Virgil shows up with those classic leather black mitts. I don't think they even make them anymore *(laughs)*. My father was sold, based on Virgil's philosophy. Virgil made it fun for me. We both liked him, and I've been with him ever since.

The Ring: So Virgil practically raised you along with your dad?

AW: Yes, you could say that. There were a lot of challenges early in my life, and Virgil stepped back and let me make some mistakes. He wasn't always on me about certain things. He let me find my way for myself. People would come back to Virg and tell him things, like I'm looking kind of rough, especially when I wasn't training and working like I should have been. Virg would tell them he was concerned with Andre the man. I'll tell you this, right in front of him, I wouldn't be sitting here talking to you today without him.

God pulling on me and my father gave me a foundation for life. I knew right from wrong, but I was doing things I shouldn't have been doing. There was a time when I was squandering boxing. I had a haphazard approach, but Virgil pulled me back in by never giving up on me. I wasn't doing what I was supposed to be doing between the ages of 16 and 19. And something big in my life was going on—I was about to become a father.

The Ring: You started young then?

AW: Oh yea, I was a baby having a baby *(laughs)*. But it's nothing I should really laugh about and wouldn't condone doing, especially for teenagers. I laugh because we went through so much and got through it. It comes from relief, when I look back at everything. One really big plus about having a child so early was that my father got to see his grandson, Andre Jr. My second child, Malachi, my father regrettably never got to see him. But I remember my father was having a ball with Andre Jr. It was a sweet time in my life, but it was also a bitter time. My father would be having a ball right now. I have a daughter Mira, who is two, Andre Jr. is nine, and Malachi is seven. My father would have had a ball with his three grandkids *(a crack of emotion in his voice)*.

But I'm 26 with three kids. I had to grow up fast. My wife Tiffiney put up with a lot. I mean *a lot*. We've been through some things together *(laughs)*. We were arguing and fighting. We were always at each other's throats. She's a strong woman, and we put up with each other a lot. We grew together. We lived with Virgil and his wife, and they were go-betweens for us many a time *(laughs)*. We'd scream at each other, and Virgil would always step in and get to the bottom of it.

The Ring: How did Tiffiney and you meet?

AW: It's funny. I've always at heart been a one-woman man. As a young man, you try to be a player and run with the crowd, but I was never any good at it *(laughs)*. Some guys, especially athletes, go through women like a sport. I've always been an old soul, thinking beyond my years. We met in Washington State. My brother, after he got a little older, moved to Washington with his mom. I used to go and visit him. He was going to Timberline High, in Lacey, Washington. I was up there one time waiting for him when I saw Tiffiney. I saw her from a distance—and my brother, Jon, knew my style. My brother knew I couldn't deal with ugly feet *(laughs)*. That was the first interaction we had. I told Jon to go over and look at her feet *(laughs)*.

The Ring: You're kidding me?

Tiffiney Ward: No, he's not *(laughs)*. I was a little shocked. I was like *what*! I remember I had these open-toed shoes on, and here comes his brother, Jonathan, trying to talk to me about his brother and he's looking at my feet in mid-sentence *(laughs)*. I had no idea what he was doing.

AW: It didn't happen that easily *(laughs)*. I didn't even ask her out. I was going to wait until she came to me *(laughs)*. She had a boyfriend at the time. I thought I had it all *(laughs)*. I watched, checked her out, asked questions, and did my research *(laughs)*. Then we saw each other later and talked. We talked together the next day. I began visiting my brother more frequently *(laughs)*. He thought I was coming up just to see him *(laughs)*. I kept going up to see her. I felt like I loved her. I didn't want to be with anyone else. She didn't want to be with anyone else. Then I got a call.

The Ring: One of those life-changing calls?

AW: I used to call Tiffiney from a landline in my high school *(laughs)*. I won't forget that day. I can't. I think I just finished football practice and I called Tiffiney. She told me she was getting sick and that's when it actually came out that she was pregnant. I felt like, because of the individual that I am, we'll figure this out, but, at the same time, I was scared. I'm a kid in high school, thinking I had the rest of my life in front of me. Then I had all of these things that were going through my head—my life is shot—I was thinking this. Tiffiney was scared. I was scared. There is a lot weighing on you when you get news like that, especially being so young. One of the first things that I thought about was what are the people supporting me going to say? I wanted to take on the challenge. Abortion was out of the question. That wasn't even a thought. But how was I going to tell my father?

The Ring: How did you tell your father?

AW: I think I told Virgil first *(laughs)*. I don't think I initially told my dad. Virgil was very supportive, and he kept saying, "Let's figure this out." I was scared to death. You have to understand, I started boxing at nine years old and I'm 16 thinking it may all be over from one decision I made. My wife is unbelievable. Never once did she waver. My father knew already, but he wanted to hear it from my mouth. He was scared to death too. When we finally spoke, I was a little surprised at the support that I got. Again, in retrospect, it's what makes Andre the man and Andre the fighter the same man. All of that comes into the ring with me every time I fight. When you go into that ring, all that you are, your whole life experience and the essence of who you are goes in with you. Anyway, we were all able to persevere and get through it. That whole experience made us all stronger, me, my wife, Virgil, and my father. After going through that, you get the sense that there's nothing you can't do.

The Ring: You were quite an athlete at Hayward High. Why did you pick boxing over a future in football?

AW: I was a defensive back and tailback, and I felt I could have gone to the next level and played Division I football as a defensive back. My first love over everything, however, was baseball, and then came boxing. Football actually was never an option because I wasn't supposed to play football. Or let me put it this way, I wasn't *allowed* to play football *(laughs)*. Here's the funny thing: My father was willing to put me in a boxing ring, but he wouldn't let me play football *(laughs)*. He used to say one shot in football, and you're done. So I used to sneak around my father *(laughs)*. I don't know how I pulled it off. I would come home with dirt under my nails after practice *(laughs)*. My father's approach was always if he saw something, he would address it. My father didn't notice, but Virg did *(laughs)*.

The Ring: What happened next?

AW: This is a great story: Here it is halftime of a game at Sunset Field and I see my father and Virg. I saw them coming from a distance and I ran. I changed my clothes as fast as I could *(laughs)*. They knew what was going on. I got embarrassed—not right there on the spot, later. I couldn't play anymore after that. I gave the coaches the low down.

But ironically, my father let me play the next year. I was an athletic kid and could see certain things on the field and

PHOTO BY LAURA DE LA TORRE

"I remember my father lifting me up so I could look through the broken glass of the gym window. No one was in there. I saw the punching bags and the ring. I was amazed. Once I saw it, I knew. I thought to myself that this was *it*."

was able to implement them. I loved contact. Because I was still boxing, I was always afraid to get too big and lift. I had the mentality to hit and hold my own.

The Ring: How serious did things get with football?

AW: Boise State and Oregon State were interested in me. My football coach at the time, Casey Marino, had a relationship with the coach at Oregon. But I ended up going back to boxing my senior year. There was a key tournament coming up. I went back to one of my first loves. I actually loved playing all sports. I loved working hard.

The Ring: Did boxing help you in other sports?

AW: The discipline I learned from boxing did help me. I often tell my wife what it would be like to play baseball or football. I would be the same guy, doing the same things I do in boxing. I know I'm not the fastest, or the strongest, or quickest, but my mindset is I don't want to get outworked. I want to win. I know I'm extremely gifted and talented, but a lot of gifted and talented athletes don't make it. They don't work at it. Sometimes I struggle with perfectionism. It can be a good thing and a bad thing. I have come a long way, but I'm still learning. I'm a perfectionist, and perfectionists will beat themselves up. Virg has helped out a lot with that. It's an attitude that's honed. It can take you a long way, and it started with boxing.

The Ring: What was it about boxing that put it over other sports?

AW: The most important thing is that my father introduced me to the sport, but, if

not for boxing, I would have done something else athletic. There is something about boxing that you hear guys tell you all of the time and that boxing isn't a team sport. It's you—*all you*. Hayward High wasn't very good in football, and I had a real problem staying intense for games. We're losing and there were guys in the huddle who didn't care. Other guys were talking about what they're going to do after the game. *And we're getting clobbered!* I had a hard time with that. There is a lot more pressure in boxing because it's on you—just you. I like that.

The Ring: Were you in street fights as a kid?

AW: I'd like to say no, but now that I think back, maybe two fights in high school and maybe one in elementary school. Most of my life, I wasn't in the streets. Everyone knew I boxed. They didn't want to test that out. I had two street fights and they didn't last long. I think I'm 3-0 *(laughs)*. But street fighting just wasn't me. I was always afraid that my hands are legal weapons. My father abhorred bullies. My father told my brother and me never to be a bully. I was always the guy who stepped in and defended someone else. I think that's where the street fights came in, sticking up for someone else. Besides, I did enough fighting every day in the gym *(laughs)*.

The Ring: Where did your ability to adjust mid-fight come from?

AW: It's part training and part instinct. The training part comes from Virg. He challenges me and changes things in camp. We get top-flight sparring, but I don't take a lot of punishment. I'm able to get really good guys. Virg doesn't mind if a guy is having a good day against me. I was never babied growing up. It's taught me to adjust. I learned at a young age to hold my own, and, if I see something is not working, a switch will go off and I'll adjust. It's instinct, but it's also part of the way Virg brought me up.

I think I'm an instinctive fighter by nature. I don't like putting myself in a box. Using my instincts is the way I was brought up. Adjusting is something that's in me and it's a major key to being at a high level in any sport. It's instinct and experience. I know a lot of people are kind of shocked at what's happening right now, but we always had an inner-confidence we could do this in the Super Six. It comes from constantly adjusting and seeing things. Virg and my father always put me in tough. That groomed me to be a lot tougher than people give me credit for. Virg and I are starting to see the fruits we planted 10 years ago.

The Ring: Were you hesitant about getting into the Super Six?

AW: Initially, the offer came after my fight with [Edison] Miranda, and I thought that Showtime wanted to do a two- or three-fight deal with me, personally. Then it became a tournament. Myself, Andre Dirrell, Mikkel Kessler, Carl Froch, Arthur Abraham, all their names were thrown in. Originally, to me, it just seemed like too many missing pieces. I was pessimistic. But things started to slowly come together. Though honestly, I didn't think it was going to happen until I went to Berlin and I was physically there. When I saw every fighter there, it was *then* that I knew that it was real. In the boxing business, as you know, there is a lot of talking and working behind the scenes. This went on for a while. I didn't think they would pull all of that off, with all these promoters and everyone. I didn't think it was going to happen.

The Ring: It did and now the one who seems to be benefiting the most is you. Why?

AW: That was the plan from the start. My management team and me thought that we could turn it into the Andre Ward show. You have your doubters, and I certainly had mine going into it *(laughs)*. Things are going according to the schedule for us. No one is completely exuberant about it, we're just moving forward. As a team, we expected this. I looked at it like this: The initial stage of this whole thing was going to be for the Europeans. They threw in the American fighters. We were supposed to spice it up and make it interesting. That had me fired up! I look for reasons to stay motivated. I felt like I was considered a young kid who was untested against these tested Europeans. I took that very personally.

The Ring: Was your management team gung-ho about it?

AW: I have a beautiful chemistry with my team. Dan Goossen, my promoter, was doing his job and doing most of the talking on the business end. I don't need to know everything that's going on, but, when it becomes something that's legitimate and real, we'll sit down and discuss it. We spoke as a team about the Super Six, the benefits and drawbacks. Antonio Leonard, who's part of my management

Ward and his wife, Tiffiney, met while they were both still in high school and now have had three children together. "I've always at heart been a one-woman man," said Ward.

PHOTO BY LAURA DE LA TORRE

team, was getting the details and my manager, James Prince, was doing his job. My team wasn't cautious or gung-ho, just doing their due diligence in finding out as much as they could about the Super Six. We prepared like we normally prepared. It's funny how the media looked at it as a risk. We thought it would be something that will always be remembered. You had Abraham, Froch, Kessler, those were the guys they wanted—and it was fitting to look at them as the top guys—because the Americans weren't looked on as the favorites. We thrived on that.

The Ring: If not for the Super Six, where would your career be?

AW: That's a tough one because I can't really see the Super Six going on without me. We'd have to be strategic.

The Ring: Has your Super Six success changed you?

AW: I don't think it has. I'm not any different than when I started the tournament. More people know me through the Super

Six. Much hasn't changed for me. I don't want and can't let praise change me. I know what the naysayers say, but you need that. If I let what I've done go to my head, I'm through. I know it. The Super Six isn't over yet. When it's over—we'll talk and we still have work to do. I have more left than I've completed.

The Ring: How did James Prince come into the picture?

AW: I met James, who started hearing about me in the amateurs, and he let me know that he was following me. By then, I had won a couple of national tiles and we linked up from there. I saw what James did with Floyd Mayweather. I get a good sense of people when I talk to them. I liked his approach to the business. He's the best manager in the game, I think. I never had to worry about anything about James financially. I really appreciate him. Just being around him, he's taken my business savvy to another level.

The Ring: What had you heard about Prince prior to committing to him?

AW: You hear things in boxing, but what I had heard was James was a shrewd businessman and that was enough for me. James will fight for his fighters. Sometimes you're not a popular guy when you do that. He goes to bat for his fighters, and he gets the most out of it. He's not only just a negotiator and a manager, but he's a mentor. That's what I've taken from him. This is like a five-year tutorial with James. It's like a college course because I care a great deal for the man.

The Ring: What's your relationship like with Showtime?

AW: It is just business. I don't deal with Showtime personally. I come prepared, show up, and fight. But I am grateful to Showtime for giving me this opportunity in the Super Six. My relationship with Showtime is something for Dan Goossen to answer *(laughs)*.

The Ring: HBO is the so-called "Network of Champions." Do you aspire to be an HBO fighter?

AW: You have to understand, I came out on HBO. My pro debut was on HBO. I know what it's like to have Harold Lederman score your fight and hear Jim Lampley and Larry Merchant say your name. HBO is a great network. Showtime, I know, are their competitors. We'll see what the future brings. The bottom line is, whether I'm fighting on Showtime or HBO, I want to be an asset to either of them.

The Ring: What do you think of the Pacquiao-Mayweather merry-go-round, and do you ever see a time when you would act like Floyd?

AW: It's difficult in this business because none of us are privy to what's going on behind the curtain. I want to see the fight. I'm a big fan of the sport. I hope they eventually work it out and we don't have to hear too many comments that can mess it up. We don't fully know what went on. I don't think you should put your business on Front Street. If another source wants to leak something, that's fine. But my team and me deal with integrity when it comes to the business side of things.

With Floyd and Manny, they're fighting for their legacies. I can understand that Floyd wants to have things happen, and I know there are thousands upon thousands that want to see Floyd get

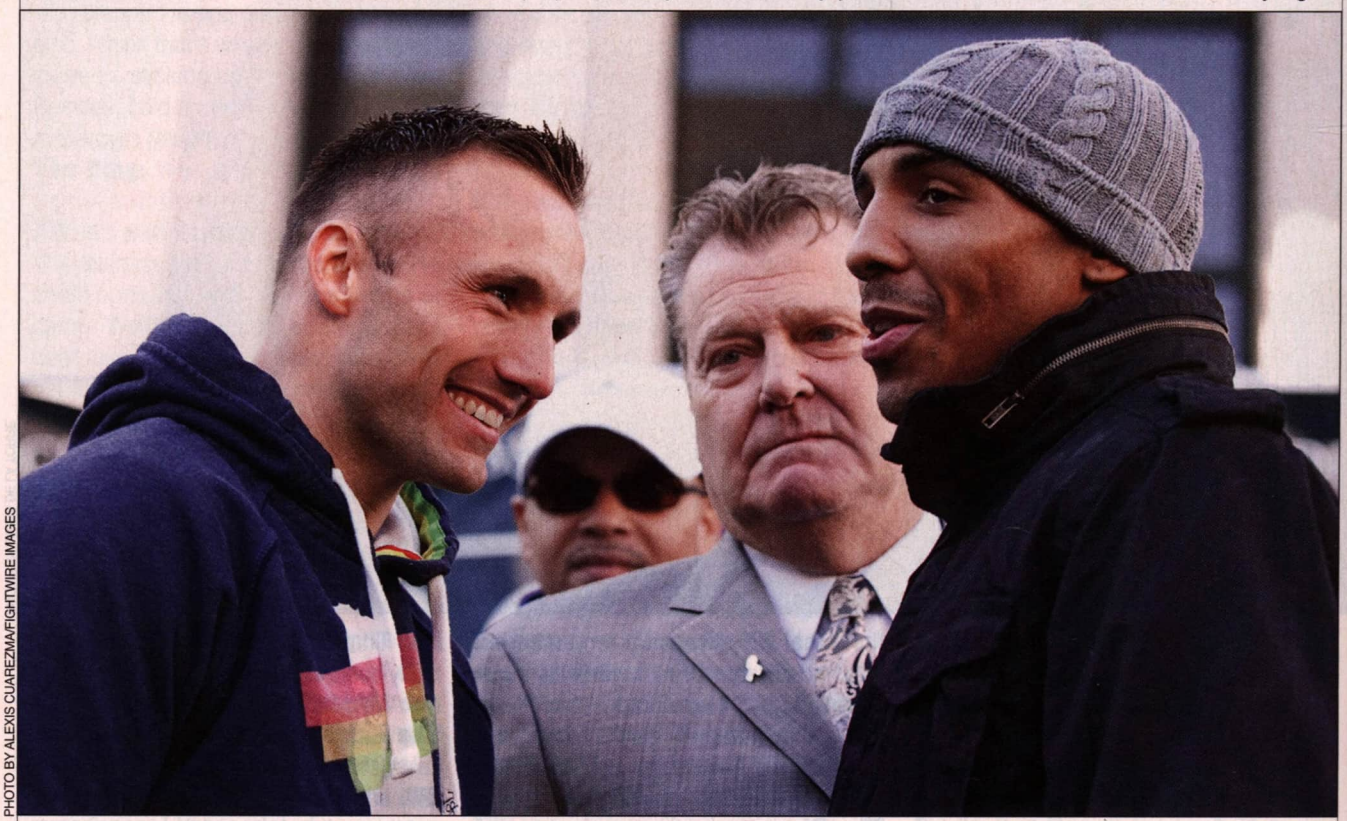


PHOTO BY ALEXIS CUAREZMA/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Ward, pictured with Mikkel Kessler and promoter Dan Goossen at an Oakland, California, press conference a few days before their fight. At first, Ward wasn't convinced that the "Super Six" tournament would actually happen until all the contestants showed up for a press conference in Germany.

PHOTO BY LAURA DE LA TORRE

"I have to be true to myself. I won't sell out to sell tickets for pay-per-view and go against the grain. I'm going to be true to myself, and we'll see what happens at the end of the day. People want to see the yelling and screaming. That's not me. It'll never be me."

beat. But Floyd has that right to have things the way he wants them to be.

The Ring: And acting like Floyd?

AW: What can I say? Floyd is Floyd. You won't see me carrying an alter ego to sell fights. Personally, I have a different viewpoint. I have to be true to myself. I won't sell out to sell tickets for pay-per-view and go against the grain. I'm going to be true to myself, and we'll see what happens at the end of the day. People want to see the yelling and screaming. That's not me. It'll never be me. I've had women come up to me and tell me they've never been to a pro fight before and that they took their son to see me. I want to be that guy where people come to see my fights—but I want the way I live to be confirmed by the way I speak and act. I want the man I am in my house to be the same man I am outside my house. I want to be able to live with what I'm going to do the next, 10, 15 years and be comfortable with that.

The Ring: Do you receive criticism for espousing your faith publicly?

AW: Yes, I do. I feel the Lord has brought me to this point. I will speak about my Christian faith and who I am. If other guys can get on camera and use explicit language, I can talk about my faith. But I don't mind the criticism and backlash. I get persecuted because of my faith. Life is a fight. And I want to fight for something positive and something that is right. I want my life to speak to my kids and build an everlasting legacy that my kids can take with them for generations. At some point soon, it will end. What kind

of legacy will I leave? That's what's important to me.

The Ring: Who has been your most difficult pro opponent?

AW: That's a tough one because every fight I've had has been tough. I don't know if there's one guy in particular that was tougher than the others. I'll let the media choose that and pick that one out *(laughs)*.

The Ring: What was your Olympic experience like, standing on the platform when you won?

AW: Surreal. There's no other way to describe that experience. It was unbelievable. Me and everyone around me were envisioning it. It's something that I trained for close to 10 years. Virg would literally count down with his fingers how many years I had to go for the Olympics. I prepared for a long time. Opportunities come and you have to grab them by the mane. That's what I did. Virgil was there and that helped me out. We dissected film and put together the right pieces of the puzzle, taking it a fight at a time.

And then there I was, standing up there, with an American flag wrapped around my shoulders and a gold medal around my neck. I thought about my dad when I was up there *(eyes well up and he pauses)*. It's still emotional. It's why I raised that gold medal and pointed to the sky. That was for my dad. Those 10 years were special—all the work we put into it. Some things I can't forget, like the people in Greece booing us. But that began to change. By the end, I heard cheers. Now I'm in the history books with Muhammad Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard, and I see what those guys went on to do.

What a lot of people don't know was that I was literally getting on the scales and eating before the weigh-ins to make 178 pounds. I was a middleweight fighting light heavyweights. I remember the weigh master telling me I was little. I kept seeing him at the weight station and he kept seeing my face. I remember Andre Dirrell losing—and knowing I was the last American standing. I had to win it for America. It's what made that moment so special. No moment as a pro will equal that.

The Ring: Were you disappointed or surprised when winning gold didn't make much of an impression among mainstream media back home in the USA?

AW: I was a bit disappointed, but it's something that I will keep the right perspective about. My family members and friends were more upset about the lack of attention and respect I got than I did. Personally, I was a little disappointed too. Not only did I win a gold medal, I was a good representative to boxing and to America. It made me grind harder. It's the one thing that fuels me. I worked half my life to get that gold medal. I didn't get the fanfare or media that past champions got. Maybe it was because of the time the fights were shown on TV. I don't know. Boxing people knew I won. I didn't get anything from the mainstream media. Oakland gave me my props; the whole Bay Area did. The way I look at it now is that I'm giving back to them in a sense with my success as a pro.

The Ring: Let's play a name game. I'll say a name, and you give me a one or two-word response.

The Ring: Dan Goossen?

AW: Seasoned veteran.

The Ring: Carl Froch?

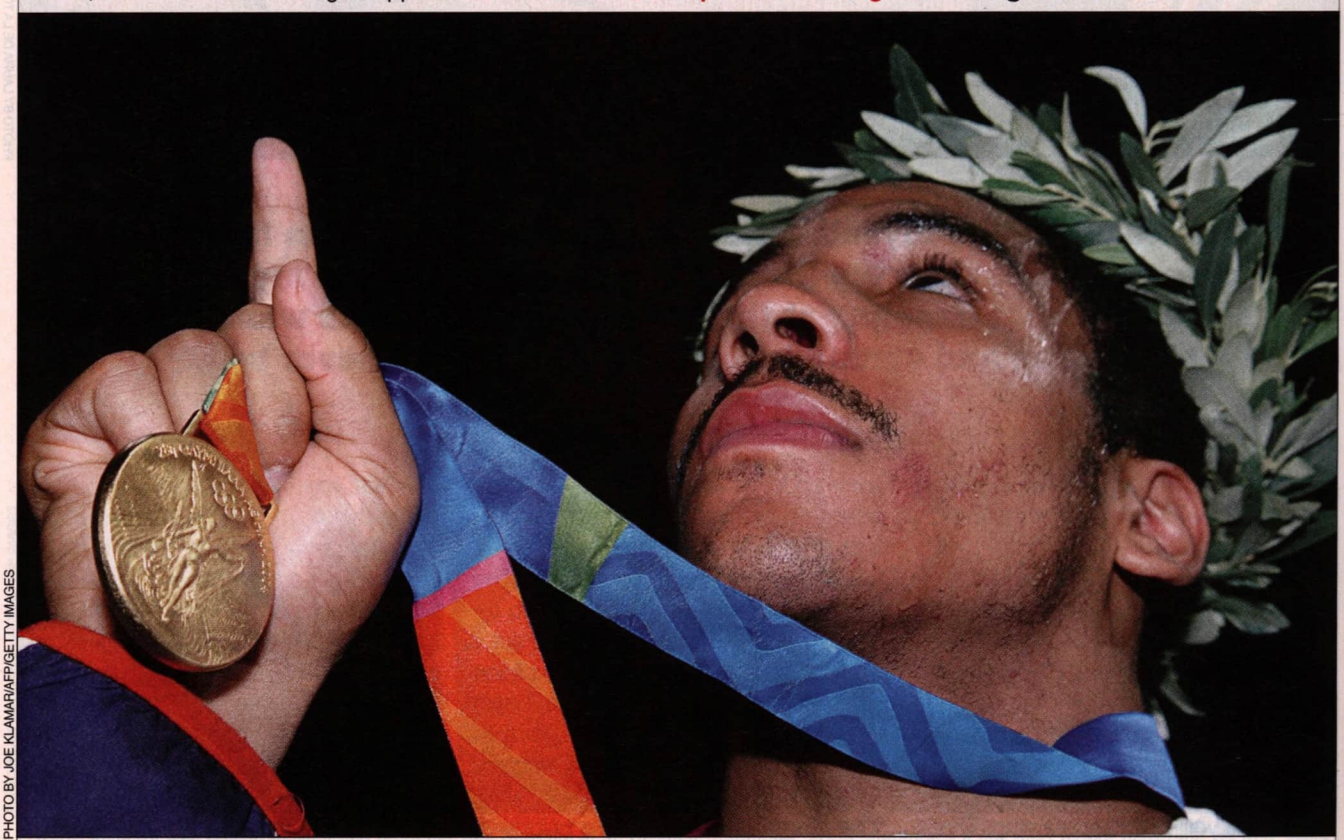


PHOTO BY JOE KLAMAR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Ward holds his Olympic gold medal and points to the sky to honor his father, who had died of heart disease prior to the Athens Games in 2004.

PHOTO BY LAURA DE LA TORRE

"I get persecuted because of my faith. Life is a fight. And I want to fight for something positive and something that is right. I want my life to speak to my kids and build an everlasting legacy that my kids can take with them for generations."

AW: Talks too much *(laughs)*.
The Ring: Mikkel Kessler?
AW: True champion.
The Ring: Arthur Abraham?
AW: Good fighter.
The Ring: Manny Pacquiao?
AW: Great fighter.
The Ring: Steve Farhood?
AW: Student of the game.
The Ring: The Klitschko brothers?
AW: Astute businessmen.
The Ring: Virgil Hunter?
AW: Underrated.

The Ring: Who most annoys you in boxing and why?
AW: After the last group of questions, you have to ask that *(laughs)*? I'd have to say Froch. I think Carl has to do less talking and more fighting. He's a former world champion, and I take my hat off to him. He earned it. He should be respected by all—but sometimes Carl has a lot of people's names in his mouth and he should be focusing on what he needs to do—period, because he has his back up against the wall.

The Ring: Has boxing politics been frustrating for you?
AW: It can be frustrating. I look at it like I have everything in my hands and no one can block me unless I allow it. I think there's more frustration from those around me about the politics of the sport. But I've seen young guys where there is a heavy push behind them, and they make something out of that fighter that he is not. That's sad to see that. Virg and I always talk about this stuff. We don't want anyone to make me, like

Bernard Hopkins. He's independent. He's done things his own way. I like the politics of the sport, to a degree. It's given me a healthy chip on my shoulder. There are things you see and read that just aren't true. It's the media's job to break you down, and they get their cue from managers and promoters. I laugh at that. There always seems to be something that minimizes me that comes from the media.

The Ring: Next in the Super Six, you're facing Andre Dirrell, who I understand you go way back with during your amateur career. The two of you are friends. What will that be like for you?

AW: The truth of the matter is Dirrell and I grew up and fought side-by-side countless amounts of times, in countless tournaments. When you see a person that much, you develop a relationship. I do consider Andre a friend. Our families used to joke with each other that if the two of us ever fought, the world would have to pay a lot to see it. It's just that the time has come sooner than I think either of us anticipated. It's certainly something we didn't plan on doing this summer *(laughs)*. It's not natural fighting someone who's your friend. Andre has more experience fighting close friends than I have. I've seen Dirrell fight Andre Berto several times in the amateurs, and they're close. Andre fought Lorenzo Reynolds, who we're both close to, and they fought several times. This is something that has to take place. We're both professionals. We'll do our best.

The Ring: What kind of problems does Dirrell pose?

AW: That remains to be seen. We've sparred before and know each other, but I'm not the kind of guy who draws too much from sparring, and they weren't extended sessions. That being said, just on paper, Dirrell is the most skilled guy I've ever faced to this point. Andre has a lot of speed and he's very athletic. He *definitely* has to be respected. Some people think he's faster than me. Andre could easily be 2-0 like me in this tournament, like me. He was more than competitive in both of his fights. I like to give opponents more credit than they normally deserve, so I don't make the mistake of minimizing an opponent. I always like to assume guys are tougher than they are, so I'm ready when they do hit me. Dirrell deserves high praises and respect. He has more of an amateur background than I do. He's highly respected by my camp.

The Ring: What held up the original September 25 date?

AW: My team was at work, and I was already four weeks away from being in tip-top shape in late August—and we still had four more weeks to go. Honestly, I

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

In his next Super Six bout, Ward will be fighting friend and longtime amateur teammate Andre Dirrell, of whom Ward has high praise: "Dirrell is the most skilled guy I've ever faced to this point," said Ward. "Andre has a lot of speed and he's very athletic."

PHOTO BY LAURA DE LA TORRE

"My father gave me a foundation in life. It's what I share with kids when I talk to them. My message is to perfect the ordinary. Get up every day and keep banging away. Dream big and continue to grind."

didn't know what the holdup was. You hear different things about different venues being discussed. That kind of stuff. I let Dan Goossen do what he does. I know he'll do a good job. My job is to stay prepared, stay ready, and, when the fight does happen, I'll be right on schedule. I know I'll be fighting Andre Dirrell and he knows he'll be fighting me *(laughs)*.

The Ring: Do you think your father is looking down, happy at what he sees today from his son?

AW: I think my father is very happy with where I am today, and, believe it or not, happier about the character person that I'm building and the way I try to live. My father gave me a foundation in life. It's what I share with kids when I talk to them. My message is to perfect the ordinary. Get up every day and keep banging away. Dream big and continue to grind. All that came from my father. He set up these priorities for me when I was young that I used to have to recite: God first, then my family, good schooling, and finally boxing. He used to get mad at me when I messed up the four priorities *(laughs)*.

I really think he'd be extremely happy with me today. The core of his happiness would be the life that I'm leading. The belts would be important, but the glitz and the glamour wouldn't affect him. I have to be a better husband, a better father, and a better fighter. It's what I'm always thinking. My father used to say he wanted my brother and me to have good things. He lived his life beyond himself. I'm benefiting from that today, trying to maintain my father's life through me. I see a little of my father along the way, and it feels good. ■

PIROG PO

Meet The Man Who Kayoed The

WER!

"Golden Child"

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

By William Dettloff

You couldn't mistake the look that spread quietly and quickly across Danny Jacobs' normally serene features about 30 seconds into his meeting with Dmitry Pirog on the Juan Manuel Marquez-Juan Diaz card on July 31. It said: *This is not good!*

It's a look prizefighters get when they come unexpectedly on the terrible realization that what they thought was to be an easy night's work will be something else entirely and is likely to end badly for them.

They realize it quickly and intuitively, before the real fight even begins, the way a dog happens upon another in a park or on the street and knows right away whether or not he is the alpha of the pair. If he is not, he assumes a submissive posture and a battle is avoided. In a prizefight, the battle is the point.

Emanuel Steward, who knows more than anyone should about the looks on fighters' faces and what they mean, remarked on Jacobs to his HBO broadcast partner, saying Jacobs looked "very uncomfortable." That was as good a characterization as any. He'd be even less comfortable in a few minutes.

On the other side of the world, hundreds of fires spread more or less unchecked across Central and Western Russia, as quickly and as silently as that look of quiet panic had come over Jacobs.

And just as the fires pulled a blanket of disorienting and stifling darkness over the fields and towns they engulfed, so too did Pirog's straight right hand visit a quiet, if considerably briefer, darkness upon Jacobs, proving once and for all that fighters know better than anyone when things are going to end badly for them.

Pirog (pronounced PEER-og) was born 30 years ago in Temryuk, a port city of about 30,000 situated along the right bank of the Kuban River in Krasnodar Krai, Russia. He is the second son born to a father who worked at the port and a medical-assistant mother.

Before one draws conclusions about the favorable economic equation relative to a family in which both mother and father worked, one should remember that Pirog's formative years bridged the last decade of the Soviet Union and the ghastly, Yeltsin-engineered economic crisis that followed its dissolution in 1991 and plunged millions into poverty. Pirog's was not a pampered childhood.

"I wouldn't say it was pleasant; it was mostly unpleasant growing up," Pirog told THE RING through Vadim Kornilov, willing interpreter and part of the fighter's management team.

(Note: Pirog speaks entirely in Russian, a language many Westerners find objectionable on aesthetic grounds, as it advertises none of the lyrical sensibilities of Spanish or Italian or even French. But Pirog's thoughtfulness is evident even to one ignorant of the precise words he uses, and his answers, as a result, and the language in which they are conveyed, isn't objectionable at all. To the contrary, he creates an impression that strongly recommends intelligence and dignity.)

"During that time, economically it was a bad situation," he said, understating the case. "I remember the electricity getting turned off and other things. Nobody was doing well then. It was a hard time economically for everybody."

As a young boy, Pirog played chess but, at around eight years old, longed for a more physical way to pass the time. Intending to join a soccer team, he and a friend visited a local recreation center and happened on a boxing gym inside. He was taken in by the milieu—it is an old story, the powers a boxing gym and its terrible attractions can exert on the psyche of a young man—and he decided to try it. He liked it. The next day he returned. And the day after that. And the day after that. And so on.

Upon learning of their son's new hobby, Pirog's parents quarreled briefly; his mother recommended, as mothers are wont to, a less dangerous activity for her son. His father counseled her to support her son's ambitions to the extent that they both could, as they did not live in a world that offered endless opportunity.

"My father always supported whatever I did," Pirog said. "No one ever pushed me toward boxing. But they didn't think much about it because people were just trying to survive at that time. They supported whatever came along because there weren't a lot of options for people to do."

Pirog discovered a passion for the sport when he traveled with his gym mates to a tournament, and, for reasons he can't recall, he wasn't matched with an opponent but his friend was.

"I saw my friend fighting and was almost kind of jealous. Really, I wanted to get in the ring and was disappointed that I wasn't up there. That motivated me to always be prepared and be good at it and to always want to be in the ring."

He has, however, positioned himself for life after the ring. He has degrees from The University of Physical Sports and Culture from Kuban University, the latter in the area of management relations. He also manages several Russian fighters, which he sees as an outgrowth of his natural willingness and ability to help other boxers.

Pirog, 17-0 (14), is slender and, at 6'1", tall and long-limbed for a middleweight. His appearance is classically Russian: skin roughly the color of the sun when positioned at its highest point in the sky, and hair dark red, bordering on brown and cut very short. He has the slightly sunken and intelligent eyes evocative of the part of the world from which he comes, and they also suggest a hard confidence one could find unsettling under the right circumstances—such as those associated with seeing him in the other corner before the start of a prizefight.

His nose is broad but mostly straight, belying the effects of a long amateur career reportedly spanning around 200 bouts. But there is evidence of his vocation to be found over each of his eyes, a lumpiness that is particular to boxers. The other physical quality that hints at his occupation is a broad, lavishly muscled back coiled under a pair of wide, ropy shoulders that are the product of the

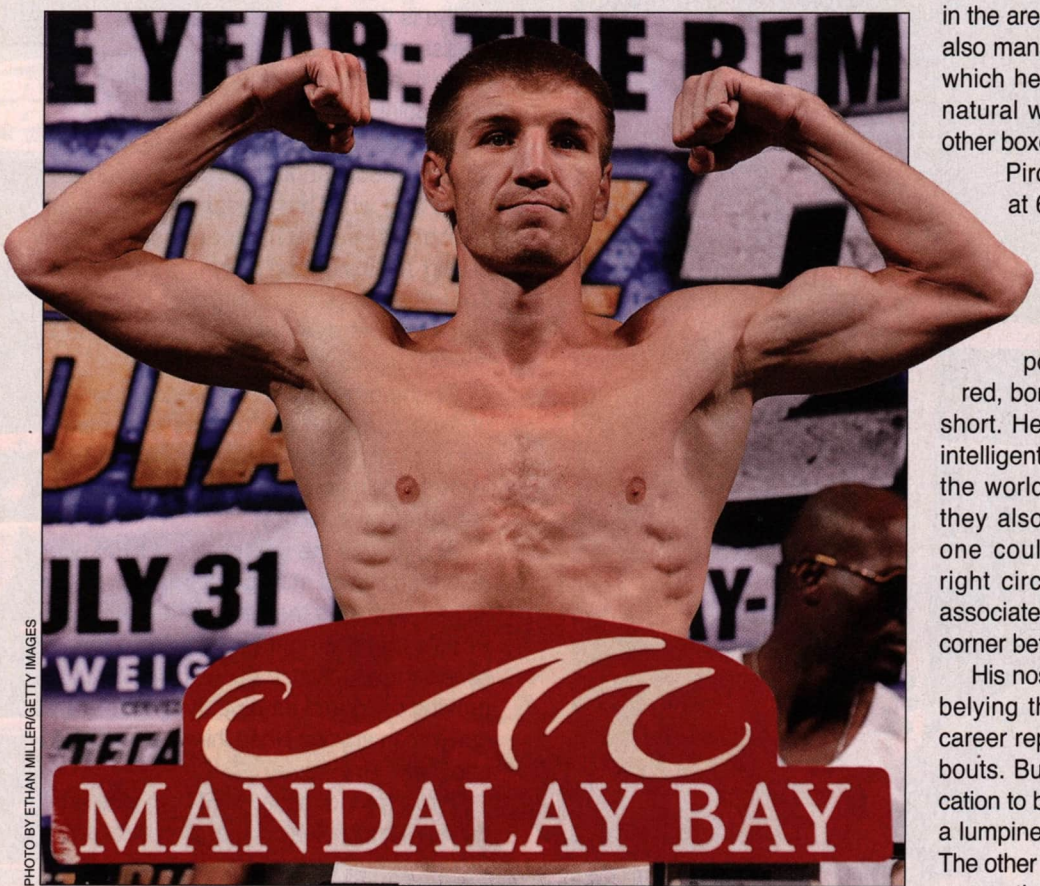
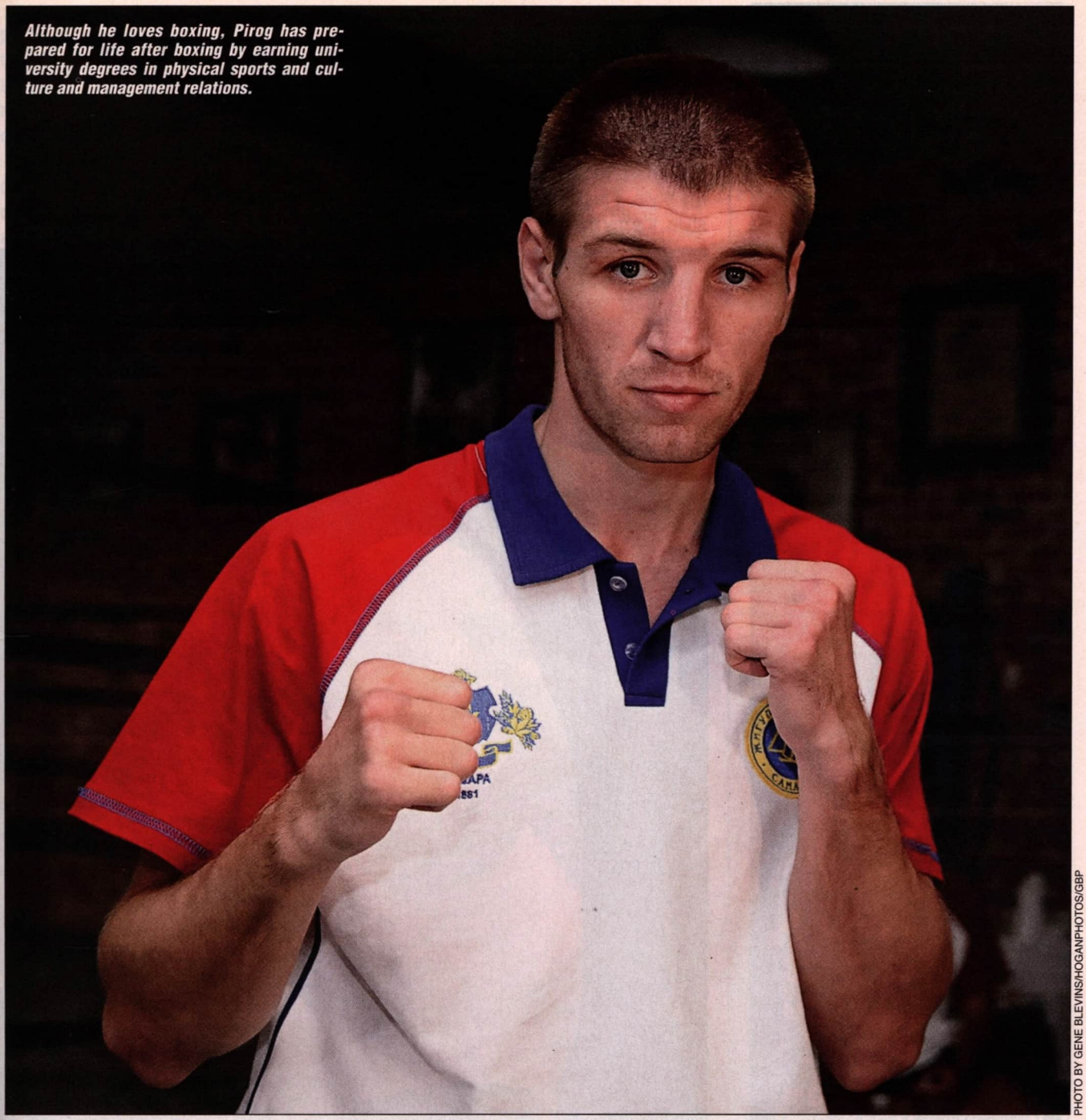


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Pirog, who began training when he was eight years old, displays his powerful physique at the weigh-in for the Jacobs fight. He developed an unusual style for a Russian boxer by watching videotapes of famous American fighters such as Ray Leonard, Marvin Hagler, and Tommy Hearns.



Although he loves boxing, Pirog has prepared for life after boxing by earning university degrees in physical sports and culture and management relations.

PHOTO BY GENE BLEVINS/HOGANPHOTOS/GBP

thousands of exercises one in his line of business must endure.

It was almost assuredly the surprising immensity of Pirog's upper torso and self-belief that unnerved Jacobs, 20-1 (17) in the opening moments of their bout at Mandalay Bay. The so-called "Golden Child" brought into the contest a celebrated amateur background and an apparent understanding that he was to be the game's next big star in America, whether or not anything on his resume entitled such a belief.

His sole win of merit came against once-promising Ishe Smith, an enormously talented fighter whose penchant for performing just well enough to lose close, debatable decisions has made him a favorite of those who promote young prospects.

One could be forgiven for suggesting that Jacobs, just 23 years old, would have been better served engaging a higher class of opponent on the way to meeting Pirog, who, one can discover quite readily through the magic of the Internet, is not the typical Eastern European fighter, if indeed one exists anymore.

He is fluid. His hands often are found at his waist or below, his defense comprised of head movement and a sophisticated understanding of distance and geography. His one-punch unraveling of Jacobs notwithstanding, he is not an enormous puncher but is exceedingly adept at creating and finding punching room and angles. And he's not afraid to break from convention when it's necessary.

Pirog said his style is borne of his circumstance and character.

"Pro boxing was illegal in Russia when I was small, so I would watch tapes and videos of fighters from all over the world," he said. "And I adapted and took things from those recordings and I use them in my style. I just feel comfortable in that style. It's my thing."

Pirog finds it an interesting coincidence that several of the fighters he most liked watching—Ray Leonard, Thomas Hearns, Marvin Hagler—fought at or around 160 pounds, the weight at which he has peaked today.

Against Jacobs, Pirog frequently switched between southpaw and conventional stances—while remaining in

Pirod displays excellent form, keeping his right hand high as he split Jacobs' guard with a left uppercut to the chin. Jacobs' first 20 pro bouts did little to prepare him for a boxer as skilled as Pirog.

prime punching position it is important to note—and, in fact, used that precise technique to set up the knockout blow. A man who can improvise like that in the ring is dangerous.

"That was not something I prepared or trained to do," Pirog said. "I just kind of did it intuitively because Jacobs was a fast mover and was moving away a lot. I just did that to shorten the distance between us."

You can watch a pug virtually any night of the week chase another around the ring for 10 or 12 rounds and know he is either unwilling or unable to corner his man. Pirog cut off Jacobs' escape routes simply by stepping to him rather than following him. A lesser fighter would have chased. Pirog executed, and the result was Jacobs suddenly appearing boneless at 0:57 of the fifth round. Referee Robert Byrd stopped his count at five so as to hurry along the resuscitation.

The only thing about being in the ring with Jacobs that surprised Pirog, he said, was that Jacobs was exactly what he expected him to be.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

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"Pretty much all I knew was from the YouTube recordings I saw," he said. "Really, the only fight I could look at was against Ishe Smith because it went on and Smith was a good opponent. When I saw the recording with his pluses and minuses and his style, it was exactly what I expected."

What followed Pirog's kayo win was rather a peculiarity in contemporary boxing broadcasting. Jim Lampley interviewed not Pirog, the upset winner who at that point in the pay-per-view broadcast had provided the only appreciable excitement, but the loser, Jacobs, who, it must be said, did himself no favors by more or less blaming the loss on the death of his grandmother, the same event he said before the fight would spur him to victory.

Nevertheless, Pirog didn't know at the time that HBO was interviewing the man he'd just stretched and didn't find out until he watched a replay of the fight. In any event, he does not seem the sort of man who would be offended by what seemed a slight.

THE RING contacted HBO on this subject and was told the following: "We had a long show to produce and we elected to talk with the fighter who had been receiving a lot of notoriety in the week leading up to the fight. Danny Jacobs is a familiar fighter to our viewers. Dmitry is a superb athlete and no slight was intended, as evidenced by the commentary of our announcers."

As we went to press, Pirog's American promoter, Artie Pellulo, reportedly was negotiating with Bob Arum and HBO over a meeting in the fall between Pirog and former middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik. Pirog said that after that fight, he is "pretty sure" HBO will want to interview him.

Pirog beats Jacobs to the punch in an exchange of right hands. It was Pirog's first bout in the United States and only his second pro bout outside of Russia. His sensational US debut has fans clambering for more.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

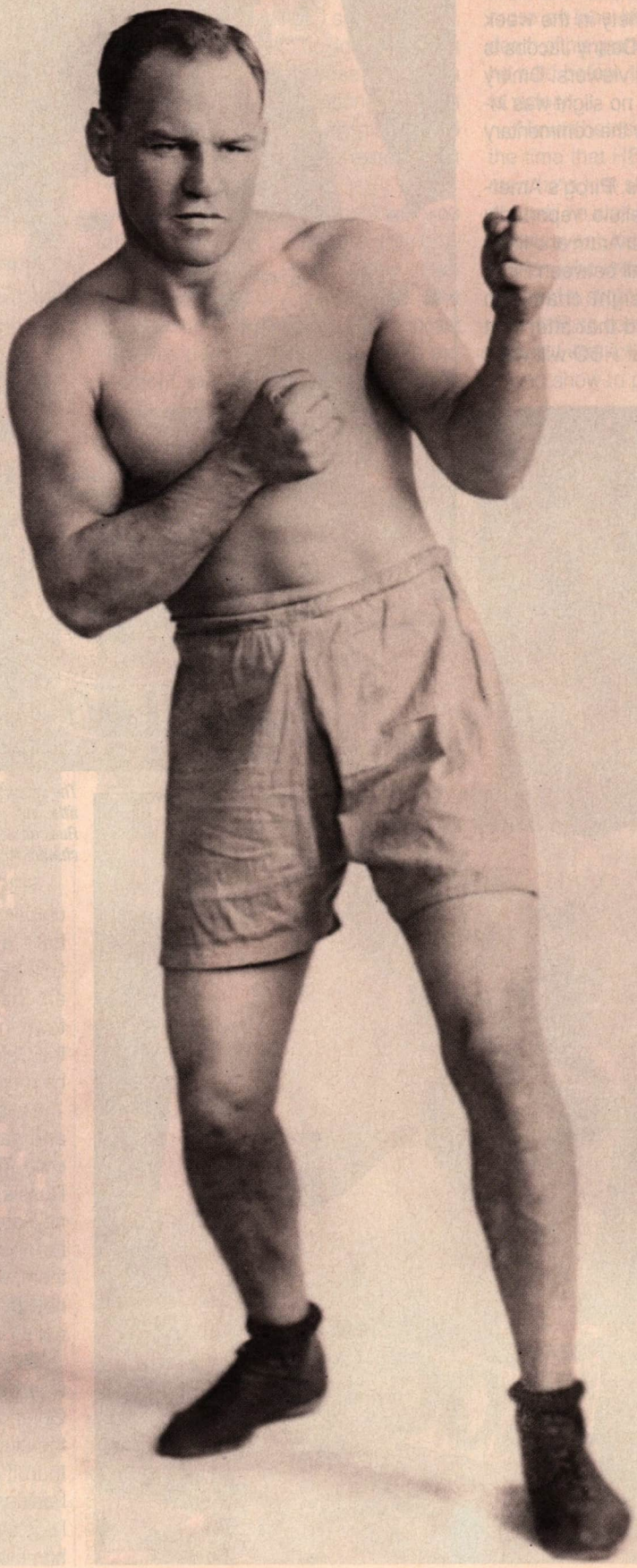
PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

The knockout of Jacobs earned Pirog the vacant WBO title, but, with a bit more seasoning, the undefeated Russian might be ready for a shot at the real world championship, currently held by Sergio Martinez.

HBO interview or not, Pirog, who is unmarried and has no children but does have a long-time girlfriend, passes the time between fights snowboarding in and around the hills of Gelendzhik, a resort town in Krasnodar Krai. It's situated on the Gelendzhik Bay of the Black Sea, and he prefers it to Temryuk.

He said he feels a lot more comfortable and safe than he did when he was a child. Then, everyone was suffering and Russia, in its current form at least, was new and teetering on catastrophe, taking its millions of poor, Pirog's family among them, with it into an economic abyss. But now things have changed in Russia. It's not so bad.

He did allow that perhaps he felt that way because he's better off now and Gelendzhik is better economically and the climate and weather is better there than it is in other parts of Russia. And besides that, the fires are far, far away; he is by the sea and the fires can't get to him there. ■



THE CRAZY CAREER OF CAPTAIN BOB ROPER

By Don Stradley

The spirit of the fighting doughboy was what Captain Bob Roper was supposed to bring to boxing when he turned pro at the end of World War One, never minding that he'd spent most of the war years at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. The Great War: British music halls, trench warfare, poison gas, German flyers, and corpses piled like kindling. The American men who'd "done their bit," even if, like Roper, they'd not set foot in Europe, were heralded in ways that no American veteran has experienced since. Ex-soldiers wearing boxing gloves were instantly marketable and almost instantly revered. That was the backdrop in April 1919 when Roper and his bombastic manager, Charley Cutler, arrived in Waterloo, Iowa, for a bout with Tommy Gibbons.

Roper already had an extraordinary amount of advance hype, but Cutler heard of a 98-pound carnival girl who challenged audience members to lift her. Through some shifting of her body, the girl prevented anyone from budging her tiny frame. Cutler figured this was easy publicity for Roper. The only problem was that Roper couldn't budge the girl either. But that embarrassment was nothing compared to Gibbons' routine at The Waterloo Theater. The *Waterloo Evening Courier* reported, "Without half trying, Gibbons hammered Roper's face into pulp, until men used to seeing such punishment said they had seen enough." Roper barely survived to the end of a 10-round no-decision.

It's to Roper's credit that he didn't retire right then. He would slog through another seven years, cramming more than 100 fights into a schedule that would bury most men. Damon Runyon would describe Roper "as gallant an old pugilistic war horse as ever laced on fighting shoes." And Roper certainly had a gallant side. In 1921, as Jack Dempsey trained to fight Georges Carpentier, a feature was written on one of Dempsey's handlers, an old, blind fighter named Jimmy Quinn. The journalist noted that Roper, on hand as a sparring partner, stayed with Quinn and became his eyes, describing Dempsey's every move. There was something about blindness—Roper also once wrote to a Brooklyn magistrate asking if he could beat the hell out of a local man, William Long, arrested for beating his blind stepdaughter. Roper asked if it "could possibly be arranged to lock Mr. Long and myself in the same cell for a short period?"

But another aspect of Roper's personality was at odds with his valiant nature, namely a temper and a style that included leading with his thumbs like a man taking bayonet practice. Of course, his supporters would say that Roper fouled only in response to his opponent's dirty work, but boxing people never disagreed on anything the way they disagreed on Captain Bob Roper.

Roper was born William E. Hammond in McComb, Mississippi, on March 2, 1894, although some records say 1891. The family line seemed scattered around the country—his father owned a lumber company in Massachusetts, but Roper grew up in West Virginia before settling in Chicago.

Some accounts say Roper boxed as an amateur before joining the US Army in 1912; others say he started boxing in the Philippines while stationed under General "Blackjack" Pershing. After earning recognition as the Army's "champion," Roper returned to America only to reenlist at the outbreak of the war. Earning a captain's rank, Roper spent the rest of his hitch as a stateside machine gun instructor, occasionally traveling the country as a recruiter.

Roper engaged in a few bouts while still enlisted, and a legend grew that he upstaged top contender Fred Fulton during an impromptu sparring session in New Orleans in 1916. Based on seeing a gym workout in 1917, *The Miami News* reported that Roper "has the punch that will take him a long way towards the championship."

After his discharge in 1919, with a wife and child to support, Roper participated in bootleg bouts at American Legion halls in the Chicago area. He became such a local attraction that his bouts were eventually held at a nearby National Guard building. Charley Cutler, a former professional wrestler who had once managed Jess Willard, thought the ex-army man would be an even greater attraction than "The Pottawatomie Giant." But Cutler knew seven years of army boxing had not created a polished fighter. With an eye towards publicity, Cutler announced the ex-Army basher would be trained by one of the great masters, former heavyweight champion Jack Johnson.

Living in Mexico at the time, Johnson had allegedly known Roper from his own Chicago days and soon revealed that Roper was his protégé. A June 1919, Johnson-Roper bout at Mexico's National Sporting Club is listed in the record books as a 10-round decision win for Johnson, but contemporary reports suggest it was little more than an exhibition, with customers booing the lack of action. *The New York Times* described Johnson as being so out of shape that he "puffed like a porpoise." Still, Roper praised Johnson in a 1957 interview. "He was as flexible as film. I'd try a hook to the body and head, and his right hand would block each in perfect rhythm," Roper said.

To keep the hype machine churning, Roper and Cutler arrived in Toledo on the eve of the July 4, 1919, Dempsey-

Captain Bob in uniform: Although he spent all of World War One in the United States, Roper hyped his military service, which was a common practice among boxers in the aftermath of the war.

Willard bout. "Roper looks the part of a fighter, and his best asset is confidence," reported the *Chicago Evening Post*. The *Laredo Morning Times* described Roper as "a handsome gentleman of physical perfection and most affable in his manner." After four years of the reluctant Willard, and now Dempsey, who seemed a hobo from the rail yards, Roper looked like the hope for the future, especially with Johnson's tutoring. Unfortunately, Johnson had to fulfill an engagement at Leavenworth Prison. Johnson's internment seemed to spawn another myth around Roper, that he'd actually beaten Johnson in Mexico, which was undoubtedly another fiction encouraged by Cutler.

While Dempsey was being pummeled in the press as a wartime "slacker," Roper was photographed in uniform and presented as a clean-living gentlemanly sort. Nevertheless, a July 1920 bout with Charlie Weinert in Newark resulted in another humiliation. Roper fouled Weinert so hard during the third round that Weinert couldn't continue. As the fans grew unruly, a novice heavyweight named Mickey Shannon offered to take Weinert's place. The inexperienced Shannon battered Roper for eight rounds to a no-decision.

Fortunately for Roper, the vogue for bouts featuring former service men was growing. His four-bout series with "Fighting" Bob Martin, the American Expeditionary Forces heavyweight champion, was probably the best of the era. Martin, an undiluted knockout puncher, had won the AEF laurels in the same 1919 Paris tournament that saw Gene Tunney win at light heavyweight. Billed as "The AEF Champion versus The Stateside Army Champion," Martin and Roper drew good-sized crowds in Akron, Cleveland, Boston, and Grand Rapids. Three of the fights were competitive no-decision bouts, but Roper won the Boston scrap. Roper fought a dozen or more "sailors," "sergeants" and "privates" in his career, but as one writer put it when describing these service-themed bouts, "It's Roper who will draw the crowd, and it's Roper who usually wins."

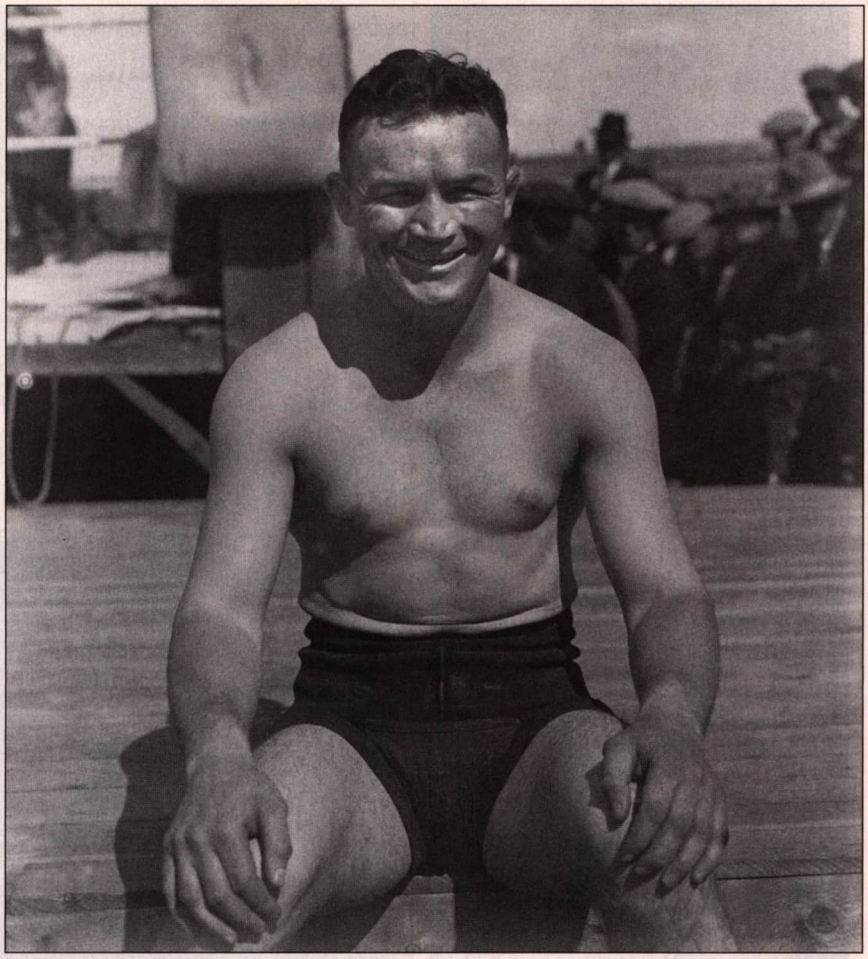
Sometime between the first and last Martin bout, Roper declared himself in the market for a new manager, hav-

ing fired Cutler for preventing him from working with certain promoters. "Captain Bob is the storm center of a dispute among a flock of managers, all of whom are anxious to guide his fistic destiny, a sure sign that he is above the ordinary," reported the *New Castle News* in November 1920.

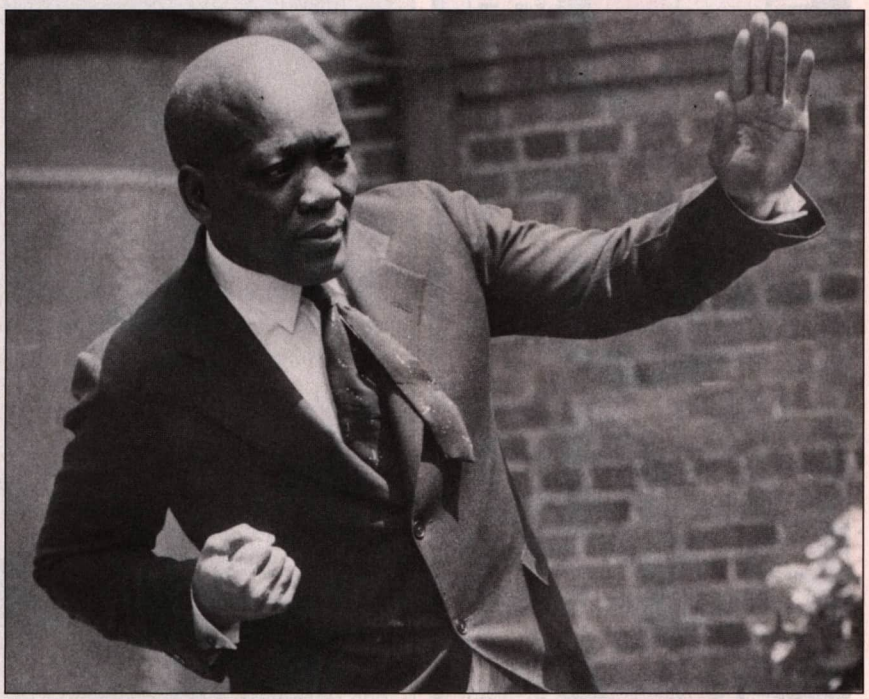
A succession of managers learned that Roper didn't come exactly as advertised. Roper once caused the postponement of a fight because he lacked train fare and couldn't get to the arena. Another time, he simply didn't show up for a bout, leaving 1,500 Syracuse fans to sit on their hands. Nattily attired in public, Roper took to wearing skull and crossbones on his trunks and was known to enter the ring with a giant snake draped across his shoulders. Desperate for attention, Roper called out wrestling champions Ed "Strangler" Lewis and Stanislaus Zbyszko, appearing ringside at their matches as if scouting them. He bragged about inventions and patents he was developing. Eddie Long, one of Roper's many advisers, told the *Chicago Tribune* that Roper was "the most arrogant fighter I'd ever handled."

Amid a blur of draws, disqualifications, and no-decisions, Roper faced some of the era's top names, usually more than once, including Carl Morris, Bill Brennan, and Billy Miske. Roper occasionally won big, but he was damned by inconsistency. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* called Roper "hog-fat," and "a sorry sight," when he lost a 15-round decision to Dan O'Dowd in May 1921. Roper beat O'Dowd twice in rematches, but, when Roper's name was mentioned as a possible opponent for Dempsey, one New York columnist suggested Roper's manager "be sure Bob's affairs are all settled and his good suit well pressed." Yet, Homer Smith, who fought such bruisers as Dempsey and Luis Firpo, claimed Roper hurt him more than anyone. "He sent an uppercut to my chin that I wasn't looking for," Smith told the Associated Press in 1927. "My head hurt for four days."

If Fulton had indeed been shown up by Roper in their 1916 sparring session, the 6'6" "Minnesota Plasterer" gained some revenge in the first of their three 1922 bouts, handing Roper the only knockout loss of his career. When Roper



When Tommy Gibbons fought Roper in 1919, it was no laughing matter. According to newspaper accounts, Gibbons hammered Roper's face "into pulp."



Former heavyweight champion Jack Johnson won a 10-round decision over Roper in 1919 in a bout that was more of an exhibition than a real fight. Johnson trained Roper for a brief period, but their relationship was cut short when Johnson went to prison.

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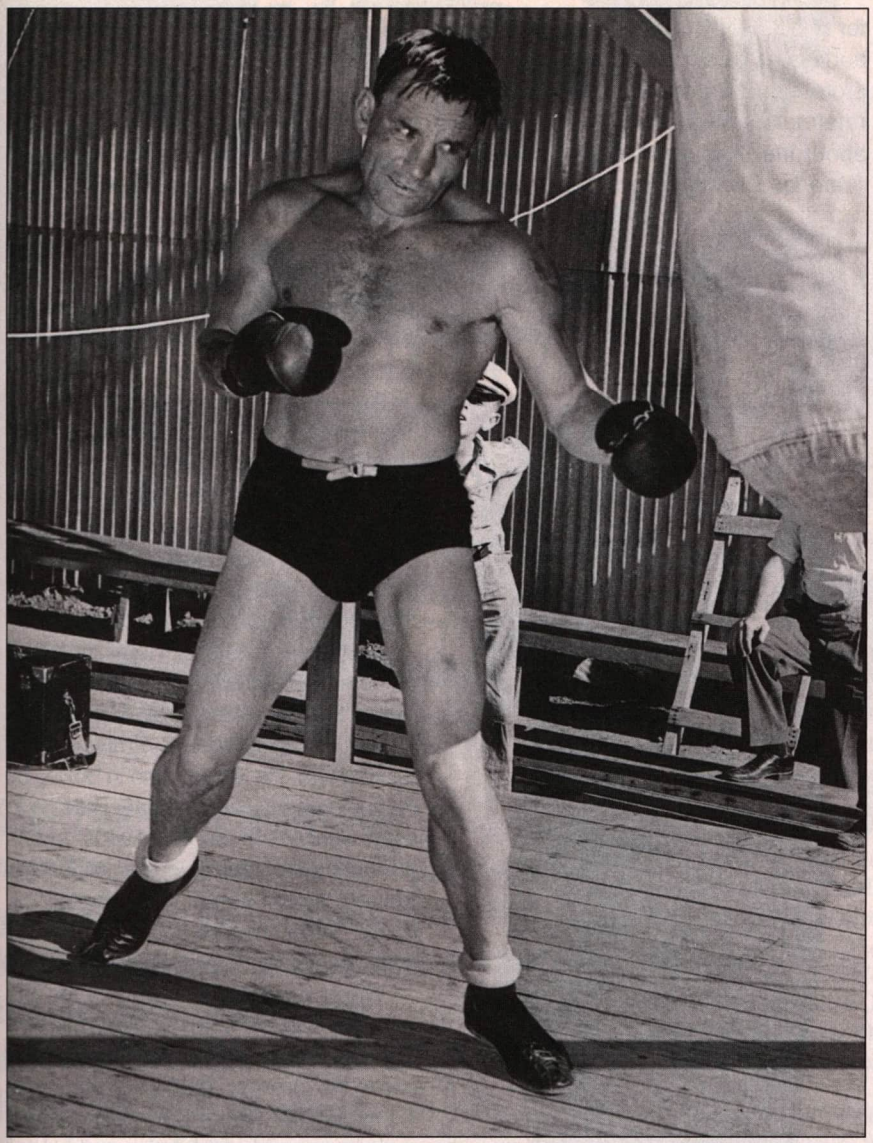
realized what had happened—he'd fallen out of the ring and cracked his head on the floor—he threw a stool at Fulton. The rematch was a draw, and reports differ on who got the best of a bloody, foul-filled no-decision bout later in the year. As *The New Times* described, Roper and Fulton possessed "quite a little ill-feeling between them."

Harry Greb was another nemesis. Despite a 20-pound weight advantage, Roper struggled five times with Greb from 1920 to 1922, losing once on points and getting drubbed in four no-decision bouts. Greb didn't escape unscathed, though. One report had Greb bleeding badly from the mouth after one bout; Greb also wore an eye patch for several weeks after the fifth bout, courtesy of Roper's thumbs.

A fifth bout with Martin was signed for October 1922 to headline a major American Legion gathering in New Orleans. When Martin bowed out with an injury, middleweight Jeff Smith substituted and gave Roper a one-sided 15-round pasting. The *Des Moines Capital* captured the general feeling about Roper by saying, "Roper is a fair scrapper, but he'll never be a champion."

On New Year's Day 1923, Roper and Greb met for their sixth bout, a 10-rounder at The Motor Square Garden in Pittsburgh,

Roper fought a pleasing four-bout series with knockout artist "Fighting" Bob Martin, another ex-serviceman. The first three were no-decisions and Roper won the fourth.



Captain Bob's younger brother Jack pounds the heavy bag while training for a 1939 title fight against Joe Louis. Bob showed up at Louis' training camp and shouted insults, but it didn't help Jack, who was knocked out in the first round.

Greb's hometown. The *Pittsburgh Post* reported that Roper took his contempt for the rules to a new level, "bending Greb over the ropes at times until it seemed Harry's spine would snap." Greb and Roper continued fighting after the final bell, forcing their handlers and a half-dozen policemen to pull them apart. The police escorted Roper back to his dressing room. As speculation grew that some of the Greb bouts were of the "prearranged" variety, Greb was fined and Roper was barred from fighting in Pittsburgh.

His star dwindling, Roper toured the southern states, scoring a string of knockouts over inexperienced local pugs. A January 1924 bout with Jack Ward was described as "a farce," with Ward crumbling in the first round after "a few love taps on the jaw." The Miami customers grew agitated over a suspected ruse. Dempsey, on hand to referee a preliminary bout, calmed the crowd by posing for pictures.

Except for a break to oversee a New Orleans chemical company, Roper fought on. In February 1925, he stopped Ralph Brooks in eight and nearly tore Brooks' ear off. "Roper kept slashing at it until the member was just hanging on," reported *The Hutchinson News*.

A loss to John Lester Johnson in April of 1926 convinced Roper, now in his thirties, that he could no longer see the right hands coming. He retired with a record of 38-26-8 (28), with 33 no-

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decision contests. By Roper's own count, there were 40 or more on top of that.

Retirement didn't curb Roper's temper. A "physical culture" business failed and landed Roper in court after he assaulted his business partner. By the winter of '28, Roper was speaking to radio audiences about the pitfalls of his old profession. "Captain Bob Roper, turned reformer, is now lecturing in California about the evils of boxing," chided the *Waterloo Evening News*. "Yeah, we remember Roper. Boxing certainly was a sin the way he fought."

Roper is pictured with Grant Butcher, a heavyweight prospect co-managed by Captain Bob. Butcher enjoyed only modest success, retiring in 1953 with a 18-10-2 (6) professional record.

Roper's temper flared again in December 1930, when he assaulted 55-year-old former champion Jim Jeffries outside of a Los Angeles courthouse. A friend of Roper's had unsuccessfully sued Jeffries over some unpaid wages. The brawl lasted a full minute before Roper and Jeffries were separated. "I've slipped a lot," Jeffries told The United Press. "But that guy—why, he's on his heels, too."

Roper's younger brothers Tom and Jack followed him into boxing. When Jack earned a title shot at Joe Louis in 1939, Captain Bob interrupted Louis' training at Chicago's Main Street Arena to scream insults at the champion before ducking out for the safety of the streets. Louis responded by kayoing Jack in one.

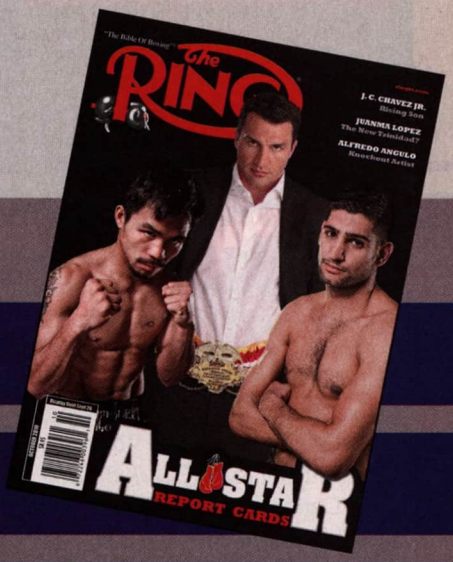
Despite his outbursts, Roper saved his money and lived well. In his later years, Roper became an expert on soil nutrition, working as a member of a mining engineering firm. He kept a hand in boxing by managing heavyweight Grant Butcher to some success in the late-1940s. In one of Roper's last interviews, he proposed a "retired boxers' home" in Southern California. "There must be something we can do for those poor guys," Roper said.

When asked to write a story for *The Syracuse Herald*'s "My Greatest Thrill in Sports" series, a jowly, white-haired Roper chose his October 1921 bout with crafty Frank Moran. Roper portrayed himself in serious trouble after being nailed by a right to the chin, Moran's infamous "Mary Ann" that had knocked dozens of men cold. Roper wrote, "At once, all turned to darkness; I was dead to the world." He rallied and stopped Moran in six.

But no such drama was mentioned in the bout's original coverage. *The Times* said only that "Moran was outclassed throughout and was all in before Roper put over the knockout punch in the sixth." Roper's memory may have been bad. He'd had a lot of fights, after all. Or maybe he was still selling the heroic image created by Charley Cutler all those years earlier, the one that was supposed to make 'em all rich. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

The RING



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[Summary]

Heavyweights

Tomasz Adamek W 12 Michael Grant
Alexander Dimitrenko KO 5 Yaroslav Zavorotnyy
Chris Arreola W 12 Manuel Quezada
Hasim Rahman KO 6 Damon Reed
Maurice Harris W 12 Nagy Aguilera
Nicolai Firtha W 10 Mike Sheppard
Justin Whitehead W 10 Colin Wilson
Seth Mitchell KO 1 Derek Bryant
Juan Carlos Gomez W 8 Zack Page
Mike Mollo D 8 Gary Gomez
Alex Leapai KO 6 Owen Beck
George Foreman III W 6 James Johnson
Rob Calloway W 6 Travis Fulton
Robert Helenius KO 6 Gregory Tony

Cruiserweights

Marco Huck KO 5 Matt Godfrey
Hugo Garay KO 1 Marcelo Da Silva
Manroy Sadic W 10 Udida Muayila
Ryan Coyne KO 9 Warren Browning
Lateef Kayode KO 8 Alfredo Escalera Jr.
Rogelio Rossi KO 4 Orlando Farias
Jeremiah Graziano W 6 Jose Luis Herrera

Light Heavyweights

Jean Pascal Tech. Win 11 Chad Dawson
(Wins Vacant World Title/Retains WBC Title)
Tavoris Cloud W 12 Glen Johnson
(Retains IBF Title)
Joel Casey W 12 Tim Bell
Vigan Mustafa W 12 Maurizio Lovaglio
Pawel Glazewski W 10 Abdelkader Benzinia
Yordanis Despaigne W 10 Frank Paines
Braimah Kamoko KO 10 Hector Velazco
Henry Buchanan KO 9 Bobby Jordan

Super Middleweights

Jean Paul Mendy W Disq. 1 Sakio Bika
Dimitri Sartison W 12 Khoren Gevor
Karoly Balzsay KO 5 Aziz Daari
George Groves KO 6 Alfredo Contreras
Francisco Sierra Tech. Win 7 Donovan George
Matt Vanda KO 3 Jose Medina

Middleweights

Dmitry Pirog KO 5 Daniel Jacobs
Sebastian Zbik W 12 Jorge Heiland
Andy Lee KO 5 James Cook
Peter Mashamaite W 12 Ishmael Tetteh
Gaston Vega W 10 Matias Franco
Marco Rubio KO 6 Jose Zertuche
Marcos Reyes KO 3 Miguel Tena
Nilson Julio Tapia KO 2 Reward Marti
Gennady Golovkin KO 1 Milton Nunez
Andy Kolle KO 1 Daryl Salmon

Junior Middleweights

Cornelius Bundrage KO 5 Cory Spinks
(Wins IBF Title)
Joel Julio W 10 Jamaal Davis
Erislandy Lara KO 1 Willie Lee

Welterweights

Diego Chaves W 12 Jeferson Goncalo
Joshua Okine W 12 Muhammad Abdullayev
Victor Chernous W 10 James J Giltrow
Ashley Theophane W 10 Delvin Rodriguez
Chad Bennett W 10 Gary Bergeron
Danny Garcia KO 9 Jorge Romero
Jesus Pabon KO 8 Ernesto Zepeda
Sadam Ali KO 5 Lenin Arroyo
Hector Saldivia KO 3 Diego Alzugaray
Daniel Sandoval KO 2 Crispin Martinez
Teerachai Or Ekarin KO 2 Moses Seran
Yordenis Ugas KO 2 Marqus Jackson
Josesito Lopez W 8 Marvin Cordova Jr.

Junior Welterweights

Devon Alexander W 12 Andreas Kotelnik
(Retains IBF/WBC Titles)
Robert Guerrero W10 Joel Casamayor
Breidis Prescott W 10 Harrison Cuello
Alberto Mosquera KO 10 Nelson Lara
Sacky Shikukutu KO 10 Silas Mandeya
Carlos Molina KO 5 Glenn Gonzalez
Patrick Lopez KO 3 Prenice Brewer
Felix Diaz KO 2 Alex Perez
Victor Cayo KO 2 Jose Alexis Castillo
Frankie Gomez KO1 Ronald Peterson
Albert Mensah W 12 Karen Tevosyan
Holly Holm KO 1 Jaime Clampitt

Lightweights

Juan Manuel Marquez W12 Juan Diaz
(Retains World/WBA Titles)
Miguel Vazquez W 12 Ji Hoon Kim
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Cesar Soto KO 3 Jesus Gonzalez
Jorge Linares W 10 Rocky Juarez

Martin Haikali W 12 Pius Dipheko
Moises Delgadillo W 10 Jose Ramirez
Rey Labao W 10 Jaypee Ignacio
Eric Castro KO 8 Whyber Garcia
Masao Nakamura KO 8 Ryota Kajiki
Mercito Gesta KO 7 Genaro Trazancos
Antonio Avila D 4 Russell Fiore
Carney Bowman KO 3 Roberto Acevedo

Junior Lightweights

Gamaliel Diaz W 12 Pedro Navarrete
Marcos Lopez KO 10 Jorge Ibarra
Allan Tanada W 10 Jose Ocampo
Devis Boschiero KO 9 Ivan Fiorletta
Argenis Mendez W 8 Shamir Reyes
Will Tomlinson KO 8 Elly Ray
Eloy Perez KO 5 Derrick Campos
Leonilo Miranda KO 5 Carlos Medellin
Fahsai Sakkreerin KO 5 Sony Fony
Santos Benavides KO 4 Carlos Guevara
Joksan Hernandez KO 1 Ira Terry
Emmanuel Tagoe KO 1 Samuel Kamau
Carlos Cardenas KO 1 Azael Villegas

Featherweights

Miguel Garcia KO 11 Cornelius Lock
Antonio Escalante KO 3 Edel Ruiz
Alfred Tetteh W 12 Ishmael Aryitey
Alejandro Lopez W 10 Edgar Riovalle
Jesus Cuellar W 10 Miguel Caceres
Jung-Suk Soh Tech. Win 9 Jong-Won Won
Sergio Thompson KO 8 Lizardo Moreno
Lorenzo Villanueva KO 7 Balweg Bangoyan
Juan Rodriguez KO 3 Hugo Partida

Junior Featherweights

Mario Macias W 10 Alexander Espinoza
Alvin Maquiling W 10 Jestoni Pepito
Guillermo Rigondeaux KO 7 Jose Angel Beranza
Reynaldo Lopez KO 1 Mauricio Martinez
Akifumi Shimoda Tech. Win 5 Chang-Hyun Son
Jackie Nava KO 4 Maria Andrea Miranda

Bantamweights

Anselmo Moreno W 12 Nehomar Cermeno
(Retains WBA Title)
Jorge Arce KO 1 Martin Castillo
Christopher Martin W 10 Chris Avalos
Christian Esquivel W 12 Tshifhiwa Munyai
Medgoen Singsurat KO 5 Sulaiman Ali
Juan Estrada KO 2 Carlos Rodriguez
Roberto Sosa KO 1 Roberto Santos De Jesus

Junior Bantamweights

Juan Alberto Rosas KO 6 Simphiwe Nongqayi
(*Wins IBF Title*)

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Bantamweight Christopher Martin slams a right into Chris Avalos

Luis Concepcion KO 1 Wilfrido Valdez
Jung-Oh Son W 12 Falazona Fidal
Fernando Okon W 10 Nelson Llanos
Jose Cabrera W 10 Luis Leon
Fred Mundraby W 10 Flash Villacura
Marco Demecillo KO 9 Joash Apericio
Edgar Sosa KO 4 Jose Varela
Victor Zaleta KO 3 Julio Cabrera
Sylvester Lopez KO 2 Wandee Singwancha

Flyweights

Tepparith Singwancha KO 6 Anis Ceunfin
Arden Diale KO 3 Jermie Jabel
Ryan Bito KO 10 Saenmuangloei Kokietgym
Manuel Vargas KO 6 Michael Arango
Wilbert Uicab KO 3 William De Sousa
Ricardo Nunez KO 1 Anduar Vargas

Junior Flyweights

Felipe Rivas KO 4 Armando Vazquez
Yesica Bopp W 10 Ana Arrazola
Hekkie Budler W 10 Evaristo Primero
Jonathan Tacuning KO 6 Warlito Parrenas

Strawweights

Donnie Nietes W 12 Mario Rodriguez
Ganigan Lopez W 12 Omar Soto
Wanheng Menayothin W 12 Jayson Rotoni
Ji-Hyun Park W 10 Nao Ikeyama

Cornelius Bundrage KO 5 Cory Spinks

St. Louis, Missouri: If you didn't know the ages of Bundrage and Spinks, you might have thought this was a case of the young, hungry challenger defeating the old, over-the-hill titlist in an off-TV bout at the Scottrade Center on the undercard of Devon Alexander's disputed points win over Andreas Kotelnik. Instead, the storyline was less standard, as we actually saw an old, hungry challenger get the better of a younger, over-the-hill titlist. Either way, it was an upset, as Bundrage, 37, was thought by most to be more clubfighter than serious contender, whereas Spinks, 32, is a former RING welterweight world champion with an elite boxing pedigree.

But there were numerous factors working in Bundrage's favor. For starters, Hall of Famer Emanuel Steward now trains the former *Contender* contestant. Additionally, Spinks hadn't fought in 16 months (though, to be fair, Bundrage had been off 14 months himself waiting for this twice-postponed bout to happen). And Spinks had not made good use of that time off, reportedly ballooning to about 200 pounds and getting busted on a DUI charge in Florida while training for the fight. Fearing for Spinks' health, career-long trainer Kevin Cunningham quit the corner back in January, leading the IBF junior middleweight beltholder to hire Buddy McGirt instead.

Despite all these warning signs, it was generally believed that the southpaw Spinks had too much skill for the muscle-bound, awkward "K9," especially fighting in his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri, where it would be tough for Bundrage to win a close decision. But Bundrage, 153½, Detroit, Michigan, was all over Spinks, 153½, from the start, with no intention of letting the fight go to the scorecards.

At the opening bell, Bundrage charged across the ring at Spinks and put the titleholder on the defensive with his work rate throughout the first minute. The pace slowed for the next two minutes, but K9 came out snarling again in the second round, landing one right hand after another. Spinks, his defensive reflexes dramatically diminished from his prime of about six or seven years ago, was staggered and then knocked into the ropes. Had Bundrage been a more accurate puncher, Spinks might not have made it out of the second round.

But the veteran lefty did make it to the bell and, on unsteady legs, made it through the third and fourth rounds as well. Unfortunately for the light-hitting Spinks, he had nothing in his arsenal to keep Bundrage off him. In the fifth, Bundrage trapped him against the ropes and scored with several overhand rights, sending Spinks through the ropes and onto the ring apron. Spinks climbed back in the ring and got to his feet but stumbled back a bit when referee Mark Nelson (USA) reached the count of eight, leading the official to wave off the fight at the 1:28 mark.

"The referee stopped the fight, but I don't know why. I totally disagree," complained Spinks, 37-6 (11). Spinks and McGirt, who also said it was a quick stoppage, were probably the only two people in the Scottrade Center who felt that way. According

Bundrage upsets Spinks for the biggest victory of his career

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

to CompuBox stats, Spinks landed only 17-of-73 punches, compared to 44-of-222 for Bundrage.

"I knew I was going to get him. It was just a matter of time," said new beltholder Bundrage, 30-4 (18) with 1 no-contest. Bundrage then proceeded to call out Manny Pacquiao, which is a fairly ridiculous pipe dream. But Bundrage can be forgiven a moment of over-exuberance immediately following the best win of his career.

Promoter: **Don King Productions**
(8-7-10)

Donnie Nietes W 12 Mario Rodriguez

Guasave, Mexico: Against undeserving challenger Rodriguez, the biggest worries for strawweight beltholder Nietes were the sauna-like conditions and a possible hometown decision. In the end, the heat proved more dangerous to Nietes than Rodriguez or the judges.

The unassuming Nietes piled up points and had Rodriguez badly hurt through nine rounds but then had to cruise through the final three as he won a unanimous decision at Luis Estrada Medina Auditorium, a non-air conditioned venue that had temperatures fluctuating between 95 and 100 degrees. It was likely much hotter under the ring lights.

It was the Filipino's fourth defense of the WBO belt and his third in Mexico. "I was never groggy—he was, not me," Nietes told the *Philippine Star*. "It was a big honor for me to beat a Mexican in his hometown. I showed I'm not afraid to fight anyone, anywhere."

"Snake" Nietes, 105, Bacolod City, Philippines, simply outclassed and overwhelmed "El Dragoncito" Rodriguez, 103½, Guasave, Mexico, until wearing him down. Rodriguez was reluctant in the first three rounds as Nietes pelted him with jabs. A more aggressive Rodriguez, 10-6-3 (7), got in close and began firing away with hooks in the fourth, but Nietes, 27-1-3 (15), made him pay with short uppercuts and vicious bodyshots on the inside.

Though having questionable credentials, to put it mildly, the 21-year-old Rodriguez proved game and gritty. He fought through a badly mangled nose in the eighth round that left his face spattered with blood. Referee Raul Caiz Sr. (USA)

[The Ring Fighter of the Month]

Jean Pascal

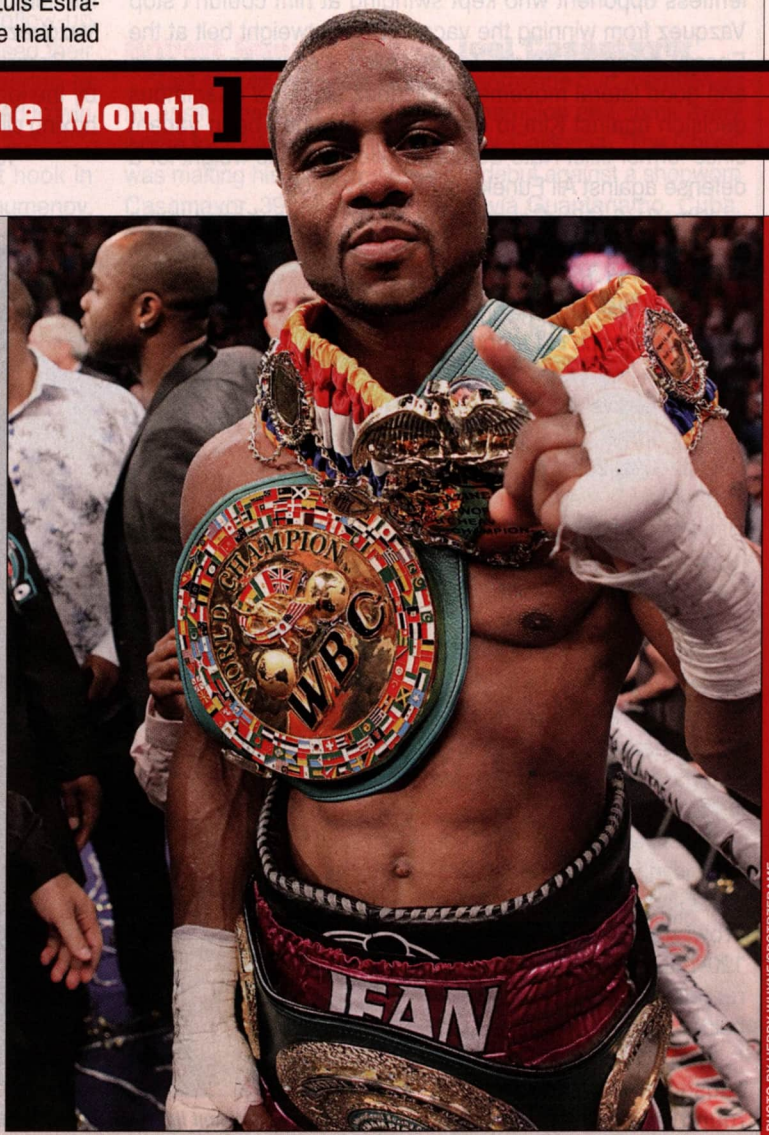

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPOTRZFRAME

It's a shame that when we get a surprising result, the focus sometimes drifts toward the loser and what he didn't do. In the United States, at least, much of the attention was still being directed toward Chad Dawson in the days following his upset loss to Jean Pascal for the vacant Ring light heavyweight world championship.

Pascal proved that he's a special fighter, and Dawson's overly cautious effort and the fight's premature ending should take nothing away from the inspired performance the Haiti-born Canadian put forth en route to winning a unanimous 11th-round technical decision. We should have expected nothing less from the gutsy Pascal, who battled through three shoulder dislocations to outpoint Adrian Diaconu last December. Against Dawson, a 4-to-1 favorite, Pascal fought as if he realized this was the biggest night of his career. He took the fight to his taller opponent from the opening bell, constantly driving Dawson back and preventing the southpaw from finding his rhythm.

The impressive win puts Pascal in an exclusive club as one of only six fighters to currently hold a Ring world championship belt. With a number of intriguing options, including a unification bout with Tavoris Cloud, rematches with Froch and Dawson, and an all-Montreal showdown against Lucian Bute, there's no doubt Pascal will give fans plenty to talk about in the coming months.

allowed the fight to continue, and, in the 10th, an accidental headbutt cut Nietes, 28, on the left eyebrow. Possibly more accustomed to the climate, Rodriguez got the better of it in the final three rounds behind a busier work rate, though Nietes never appeared to be in any danger.

"I wanted to knock him out because I was afraid of losing by a hometown decision," Nietes said. "I broke his nose, and I thought the referee would stop it. But the guy was durable. I couldn't even knock him down. I hit him with a lot of good shots, and he kept coming back."

Levi Martinez (USA) scored it 119-109, Alejandro Lopez Cid (Mexico) had it 118-110, and Thomas Nardone (USA) saw it 116-112, all for Nietes, who is ranked fifth by THE RING at strawweight.

Promoter: **Erik Morales Box Latino**
(8-14-10)

Miguel Vazquez W 12 Ji Hoon Kim

Laredo, Texas: A gash on the side of his head and a relentless opponent who kept swinging at him couldn't stop Vazquez from winning the vacant IBF lightweight belt at the Energy Arena in Laredo, Texas. Using a sharp boxing style and good lateral movement, Vazquez scored a unanimous decision against Kim to claim a belt that had been vacant since former titlist Nate Campbell failed to make weight for a defense against Ali Funeka in February 2009.

Kim, 21-6 (18), Goyang City, South Korea, hadn't lost a fight in six years and was enjoying an 11-bout knockout streak. He was also making his third appearance in Laredo. As one would've expected, Kim was aggressive throughout and landed some good punches. But Vazquez, 26-3 (12), Guadalajara, Mexico, was able to short circuit Kim's rushes with some classic, old-school boxing. Vazquez had particularly big rounds in the fifth and seventh, cornering Kim and landing several head and body shots. Vazquez was also effective at dominating the latter half of rounds, rallying to impress the judges.

His style worked. The three American judges, Charles Phillips, Glen Hamada, and Glenn Trowbridge, scored the bout 120-108, 119-109, and 118-110, respectively, all for new beltholder Vazquez.

Kim's reckless approach caused problems as early as round one, when a clash of heads momentarily halted the fight so that referee Laurence Cole (USA) could examine both fighters. There were more head clashes in the second half of the bout, and, by the end of the evening, both fighters were cut as a result of butts. After a hard cracking of heads in the ninth, Vazquez showed his frustration with Kim's headfirst style. Losing his cool for the first time all night, he ripped into Kim with combinations. Then he resumed boxing, using jabs to keep Kim under control.

Vazquez, 23, emerged as a fighter to watch in 2009 when he scored an upset split decision over Breidis Prescott on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*. Prior to that, he was known mostly for beating weak opponents in Mexico. He lost a one-sided bout to Timothy Bradley and has dropped a pair to Saul Alvarez, but he showed against Prescott and Kim that he's become a steady, intelligent pro.

The final two rounds saw Kim, 134¼, desperately trying to land something, but he was off target. Vazquez, 134¼, stayed calm, using the same boxing game that had gotten him through the previous 10 rounds. When Kim got too rowdy, Vazquez simply smothered him in clinches.

Some observers appreciated Kim's efforts and were puzzled by the lopsided scores. Still, most thought Vazquez put on a boxing clinic against a game but unskilled opponent.

Television: **Fox Sports Net/Fox Sports en Español**
Promoters: **Banner Promotions, Top Rank**
(8-14-10)

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Vazquez claimed a vacant lightweight title by beating Kim

Beibut Shumenov W 12 Vyacheslav Uzelkov

Lemoore, California: A flat Uzelkov couldn't take the triple-digit heat or the constant pressure from a determined Shumenov, as the 2004 Olympian earned some respect with a lopsided decision win outdoors at the Tachi Palace Hotel & Casino.

For Shumenov, 175, Las Vegas, Nevada, via Kazakhstan, it was the first defense of the WBA light heavyweight belt he captured in January with a questionable decision against Gabriel Campillo. The 26-year old showed much better stamina against Uzelkov, 172, Vinitza, Ukraine, who'd stopped his previous 10 opponents, including Campillo in 2007.

Shumenov, 10-1 (6), went right to work in the opening round, using his faster hands to rip off combinations at close range then stepping back to avoid the heavy counters from Uzelkov, 22-1 (14). A left hook to the body appeared to hurt the Ukrainian early. A minute before the bell, however, Uzelkov caught Shumenov with a quick counter left hook that put the beltholder on the floor.

Shumenov beat the count and survived the follow-up onslaught from Uzelkov, whose bombs mostly missed their mark. Shumenov quickly cleared his head and began to reassert himself by the end of the round. He appeared to win every round the rest of the way.

Uzelkov continued to threaten with his big left hook in the second, but he was unable to cleanly catch Shumenov, whose aggression and work rate gave him the edge. In the final seconds of the third, Shumenov fired a counter right hand to the temple over an Uzelkov right hook to briefly put the Ukrainian on the canvas.

From there, Uzelkov went into a shell. He plodded forward, his guard high. His only offense was infrequent counter shots that Shumenov easily avoided. After being dropped in the first, Shumenov negated Uzelkov's left hook by circling away from it and keeping his right hand high. He thumped Uzelkov with combinations to the head and body and, at times, drove his opponent backward.

Uzelkov simply had no answer as Shumenov continued to rack up points. According to CompuBox, Uzelkov averaged just 22 punches per round, finishing with 62 connects on 269 shots. Shumenov landed 159-of-691 punches.

Ralph McKnight (USA) and Ignacio Robles (Panama) scored it 118-110, and Ray Balewicz (USA) had it 117-109, all for Shumenov, whose win allowed him to enter THE RING ratings at number eight. Uzelkov, who was sixth, fell out of the top 10 with his meager effort. The referee was Jon Schorle (USA).

Television: **ESPN2**

Promoters: **Goossen-Tutor, KZ Event Productions**

(7-23-10)

Robert Guerrero W 10 Joel Casamayor

Las Vegas, Nevada: How can someone hurt themselves by easily beating a former world champion and come away worse for it? Ask Guerrero, 27, Gilroy, California. "The Ghost" was making his junior welterweight debut against a shopworn Casamayor, 39, Miramar, Florida, via Guantanamo, Cuba, who was more of a ghost than Guerrero.

The two southpaws seemed more content to play patty-cake with each other than fight. They scored major points on the chummy scale, but the 8,383 fans on hand at the

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Guerrero's tepid win over Casamayor did nothing to advance his career

Convention Center at Mandalay Bay for the Juan Manuel Marquez-Juan Diaz main event were not pleased.

Nonetheless, Guerrero thought his victory could have earned him a shot at RING lightweight champion Marquez.

"I want to go back down to 135," said Guerrero, 138. "I feel better there, and I have some unfinished business there. Marquez is the best lightweight in the world; he's the world champion, so of course I want to fight him. He's the one I want to be in there with more than anyone right now.

"It's funny, because Marquez is always talking about fighting Manny Pacquiao again. But when I'm brought up or my name is in there, he avoids answering that question. We all know Pacquiao won't fight Marquez again. Then why can't I get into the picture?"

An impressive performance against Casamayor would have helped his cause, but there was nothing impressive about the way he beat the creaky Cuban.

Guerrero, 27-1-1 (18), stunned Casamayor in the second with a right. Reeling on shaky legs, Casamayor was penalized a point by referee Jay Nady for holding before eventually going down. Casamayor, 37-5-1 (22), beat the count, and the fight dragged on.

In the fourth, Casamayor, 138½, landed his best punch of the fight up until that point, but he was still having problems trying to find a way to penetrate Guerrero's defense. Finally, in the 10th, Casamayor did land something substantial, downing Guerrero with a southpaw jab. The former Cuban Olympian picked up his urgency level after Guerrero beat the count, but, by then, it was too late. The two friends embraced at the bell, but the bored audience wasn't feeling the love.

The trio of American judges all scored it lopsidedly in favor of Guerrero: Robert Hoyle and Dick Houck both had it 98-89 for Guerrero, and judge Lisa Giampa scored it 97-90. THE RING had it a little closer, giving it to Guerrero by a 96-92 margin.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Golden Boy Promotions**
(7-31-10)
Joseph Santoliquito

Jorge Linares W 10 Rocky Juarez

Las Vegas, Nevada: Poor Juarez. The 30-year-old veteran from Houston, Texas, tried and tried, but regardless of everything he did, it just wasn't enough against the 25-year-old Linares, Tokyo, Japan, by way of Barinas, Venezuela. Juarez, 132, fighting for the first time in his career as a lightweight, simply wasn't big enough for the rangy Linares, 132½. Giving away three inches to the 5'8" Linares, Juarez struggled to get inside throughout the bout.

The twist is that Juarez was the one coming forward, forcing the fight, while Linares was backing away and tactically picking apart the 2000 Olympic silver medalist. Once Linares found his rhythm, he used his reach to keep a comfortable distance from the plodding Juarez, 28-7-1 (20).

By the third, Linares, 29-1 (18), was making Juarez pay each time he attempted to get closer. Linares connected with a left uppercut and worked the body and head in the fourth. By then, Juarez' right eye was beginning to swell.

Linares floored Juarez with a left uppercut in the fifth, a punch that actually hurt Linares more than the recipient. "When I dropped him, it hurt my left hand," Linares said. "I had to be really careful the whole fight because he's really dangerous and he can really take a punch. I was never really tired, but I was always worrying about his experience."

Linares proved to be too much for the game Juarez

PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Juarez was never able to recover. Linares kept the jab in Rocky's face, and, by the ninth round, Juarez' right eye was nearly shut. Sensing the fight slipping completely out of his hands, Juarez got inside in the ninth, pinning his foe on the ropes and working the body.

With fans chanting "Rocky, Rocky, Rocky," Juarez came out desperately in the final round, but Linares continued to feed him a steady diet of jabs.

The final result was never in doubt. Judges Dave Moretti and Ricardo Ocasio both scored it 99-90, while Al Lefkowitz had Linares winning, 97-92. THE RING agreed with Lefkowitz' score. Russell Mora (USA) was the referee.

It marked the second-straight victory for Linares since he was stopped in the first round and lost the WBA junior lightweight belt to Juan Salgado in October 2009. With the loss, Juarez fell to 1-4-1 in his last six fights. Afterward, he acknowledged that he was thinking of retirement.

"I feel good, but [Linares] clearly won the fight," Juarez said. "I just couldn't catch my rhythm. I couldn't do what I worked on in the gym. I don't know what's next. I'm seriously thinking about it."

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Golden Boy Promotions**
(7-31-10)
Joseph Santoliquito

Jean Paul Mendy W Disq. I Sakio Bika

Las Vegas, Nevada: The prize was a shot at IBF super middleweight beltholder Lucian Bute. Bika, 31, Sydney, Australia, via Douala, Cameroon, had not fought in almost a year, shut down by managerial and promotional issues. Mendy, 36, Paris, France, on the other hand, had been slightly more active, fighting five times within the last three years.

On paper, it looked like another attractive bout that added to the intriguing Juan Manuel Marquez-Juan Diaz undercard at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center.

It wasn't. For the 89 seconds it lasted, Bika, 28-4-2 (19), proved to be the vastly superior fighter. He didn't show any rust during the short time that he was in the ring against Mendy, 29-0-1 (16). *The Contender Season Three* champion came out aggressively, attacking Mendy and backing him against the ropes. The telling blow was a looping left hand that nailed Mendy, 167, on the corner of his forehead.

The shot dropped Mendy to his knees, but an emotionally charged Bika, 166, slammed a right to Mendy's head while he was still down. The late punch seemed to freeze everyone, including the two fighters, the fans, and the media. It did not, however, stop referee Joe Cortez (USA) from reacting.

After the Bika blow, Mendy pitched forward and fell stationary on the canvas for about 25 seconds. Cortez immediately stepped in at the 1:19 mark, stopped the fight, and awarded Mendy a first-round disqualification victory.

Though he did nothing to earn the opportunity, Mendy is now Bute's mandatory challenger. Bika, meanwhile, was left to regroup and evaluate his next move.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Bika is disqualified after hitting Mendy while he was down

"I'm really disappointed. I was excited. I never saw that his knees were on the ground," Bika said. "I wasn't necessarily looking for him on the canvas. I'm really upset. I wanted to be in the big fights, but now, obviously, I'm taking a step backward."

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Golden Boy Promotions**
(7-31-10)
Joseph Santoliquito

Juan Alberto Rosas KO 6 Simphiwe Nongqayi

Nayarit, Mexico: Rosas scored a punishing sixth round kayo of Nongqayi at the Palenque de la Feria to win the IBF junior bantamweight belt, a mere 10 months after Nongqayi had beaten Jorge Arce for the strap in Cancun, Mexico.

It was a one-sided battle from the opening round as Rosas, 31-5 (25), Navojoa, Mexico, overwhelmed Nongqayi with bodypunches. The 38-year-old Nongqayi, 16-1-1 (6), Eastern Cape, South Africa, finally took a knee during the sixth and was unable, or unwilling, to continue. Referee Ray Corona (USA) called the bout off at the 1:00 mark.

It was a bit of a Cinderella story for Rosas, 115, who'd struggled from December 2006 through November 2008, posting a 3-5 record during those 23 months that included losses to Fernando Montiel and Jose Lopez. Rojas has since won four in a row, culminating with the win against Nongqayi, 115. The 25-year old earned the shot at the belt by beating Federico Catubay in Las Vegas, Nevada, last November. Rosas' victory against Nongqayi was considered an upset, but some might have seen it coming, especially since Nongqayi was held to a majority draw last April by Malik Bouziane in France.

The nicknames of Rosas and Nongqayi were worthy of a Japanese horror movie— "The Monster" versus "The Golden Master"—and their behavior at the prefight press conference made fans wonder if this was going to be a fight to remember. Nongqayi was very cocky, insulting Rosas' family and telling the press gathering that he would knock Rosas out in any round he chose. Nongqayi badgered Rosas to the point where a fight nearly broke out on the dais. Rosas, THE RING's number-nine ranked junior bantamweight, kept some of that anger for the fight, grinding Nongqayi down with his steady attack.

Nongqayi, fighting for only the fourth time outside of South Africa, was looked upon as a kind of aging genius, a highly decorated amateur star who had already handled the likes of Arce and his brother Francisco. But maybe the South African's age caught up to him—a 38-year-old junior bantamweight is quite old, even in this era of fighters going on into their late-30s and early-40s. With advantages over Rosas in height and reach, Nongqayi seemed likely to retain his title, but sometimes you can't beat a guy who has the momentum, no matter how many medals you've won in South Africa.

Television: **Fox Sports Net/Fox Sports en Español**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(7-31-10)

Jorge Arce KO 1 Martin Castillo

Nayarit, Mexico: In a bout that would have meant more five years ago, Arce scored a dynamic first-round stoppage of "Gallito" Castillo at the Palenque de la Feria in Tepic.

The colorful, hard-swinging Arce, 120, overwhelmed Castillo from the start, using his aggressive style to keep Castillo, 120, off balance and wary. Arce, 55-6-1 (42), Los Mochis, Mexico, finally landed a brutal left hook to the body that put Castillo down for the count. It was a nasty shot, thrown as if Arce were trying to reach into Castillo's chest. Referee Jesus Salcedo (Mexico) waved the bout off at 2:56 of round one.

It was Arce's third victory of 2010, a considerable achievement since many have been writing him off since he lost twice in 2009. The one-sided beating he took at the hands of Vic Darchinyan and a loss to Simphiwe Nongqayi for the vacant IBF belt left many wondering if the 31-year-old Arce

had a future. Since then, he has recorded wins against Angky Angkota, Cecilio Santos, and now Castillo.

This also was Arce's second consecutive fight above the 115-pound mark, where he'd fought almost exclusively since 2006. While there aren't many commercial aspects for Arce at junior featherweight, a big fight could happen for him two pounds south of his weight for Castillo, namely a shootout with fellow Mexican Fernando Montiel.

Castillo, 35-4 (18), Mexico City, Mexico, was in the middle of his own comeback, having been kayoed by Montiel in 2008. After a pair of easy wins in Baja against journeymen Alfredo Montano and German Meraz, he was attempting to revive his career by taking on Arce. Former WBA junior bantamweight beltholder Castillo, who was ranked first at 115 by THE RING in his prime, has been kayoed twice in his last four fights.

Arce, usually a headliner, said before the bout that he didn't mind fighting in support of the Rosas-Nongqayi main event. "After I win, I can sit and watch the other fight," Arce said.

Television: **Fox Sports Net/Fox Sports en Español**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(7-31-10)

Christopher Martin W 10 Chris Avalos

Hinckley, Minnesota: The night before his *ShoBox* main event against the rising bantamweight Avalos, underdog Martin confidently said: "After tomorrow night, you'll remember Chris Martin. This is my moment."

The 24-year-old Martin wound up making a name for himself with his split-decision upset of Avalos, who'd entered with an unbeaten mark and serious momentum after three impressive wins on *ShoBox*. This one wasn't as close as the split scores might indicate, as Martin simply schooled the 20-year-old Avalos. John Mariano (USA), who somehow had Avalos winning 98-94, must have been phoning in his scores from the Grand Casino craps tables.

With a slick style and better experience, Martin, 120, Chula Vista, California, figured to be a tough matchup for the brawling Avalos, 118, Lancaster, California. Martin also gave himself a slight edge by failing to make the 118-pound limit. The local commission fined Martin, but Avalos consented to allowing the fight to proceed.

Avalos, 16-1 (13), looked a bit unsure of himself in the opening round, when he opted to box rather than slug with Martin, 19-0-2 (5). Avalos went back to his typical aggressive style in the second round. He had some success with his pressure and work rate, though Martin used his upper-body movement to slip most of Avalos' shots.

Martin used his well-timed counters to take the third, when he felt confident enough to begin dropping his hands. Avalos got through enough to win the fourth, but his punches seemed to be losing their zip. The quicker Martin dominated from the fifth round on as he continually beat Avalos to the punch with his jab, counter right hands, and repeated combinations. The lead left hook proved to be his most effective weapon, however, as Avalos seemed unable to avoid it throughout the fight.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Martin outboxed Avalos in a battle of undefeated prospects

Martin was continually able to slip Avalos' shots at close range, allowing him to remain close enough to Avalos to punish him with counters. Switching from orthodox to southpaw and back, Avalos attempted to pick up the pace in the later rounds, but the more he threw, the more Martin countered. Martin taunted Avalos at times late in the fight, and he landed a solid left upstairs in the final seconds as a hard finishing touch.

Fortunately, Mariano was overruled by Rob Hecko (USA) and Denny Nelson (USA), who saw it 98-92 and 97-93, respectively, for Martin. THE RING agreed with Hecko's tally. It was the ninth-straight win for Martin, who had a pair of draws early in his career. The referee was Mark Nelson (USA).

Television: **Showtime**
Promoter: **Gary Shaw Productions**
(8-6-10)

Chris Arreola W 12 Manuel Quezada

Ontario, California: Fights are won in the gym, but lazy fighters like to test that time-honored truism, and no one tests it more than Arreola, a talented heavyweight who once again put in a less-than-stellar performance, this time against a limited foe who refused to be intimidated.

The diminished circumstances surrounding this event should have been a wake-up call to Arreola, who, after losing to Tomasz Adamek, had been demoted from HBO to ESPN2's *Friday Nights Fights*. Had he shown up in shape and fought impressively against Quezada, 29-6 (18), he could have reversed his precipitous career slide. But it was not to be.

Arreola, 29-2 (25), told writers he'd really trained hard for this one, which in his case means he actually showed up to the gym. But when he weighed in at 256 pounds, 5½ pounds more than he did against Adamek, it spoke volumes about the true depth of his dedication.

Quezada, 32, though not a top-tier heavyweight, can take a punch and had enough grit and knowledge to make Arreola go the distance in a less-than-exciting contest that picked up toward the end. Although Quezada, 228, Wasco, California, didn't have the pop to be a threat, he found enough holes in Arreola's defense to embarrass him and get him off his game. Unlike Arreola, he was able to perform near the top of his ability.

From time to time, the Citizens Business Bank Arena crowd expressed its displeasure, which no doubt put Arreola, 29, a little farther from major network resurrection. Promoter Dan Goossen can't sell his heavyweight as a crowd-pleaser when he's clearly not pleasing the crowd. The Escondido, California, resident was already looking tired by the middle rounds as the extra weight distributed around his torso took its toll.

Quezada, worn down by Arreola's heavier shots, finally went down twice in the ninth round and once again in the 12th, which got the crowd back into the fight. California judges Jonathan Davis (117-108), Marty Denkin (118-107), and Barry Druxman (118-107) all had it for Arreola, who complained later that he'd injured both hands and gave himself a grade of C-minus.

The referee was Jerry Cantu (California).

Because both fighters were of Mexican descent, one of the alphabet gangs invented a new title and apparently extracted sanctioning fees for the matchup.

Television: **ESPN2**
Promoter: **Goossen-Tutor**
(8-13-10)

Arreola was unimpressive outpointing Quezada

PHOTO BY BRYAN CROWE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Danny Green KO 1 Paul Briggs

Perth, Australia: It is unlikely that a boxing match in Australia lasting only 29 seconds has ever attracted so much media attention and debate. Green's first-round knockout of Briggs saw a torrent of condemnation and outrage unleashed upon boxing Down Under.

"No one is as pissed off as me. Believe me," an enraged Green, 184¼, Perth, told his hometown crowd. "He ain't even a canine. He isn't getting paid a cent. He dogged it."

The 37-year-old Green, 30-3 (27), landed a right hand to the body and then fired a strong stiff jab that seemed to fly over the top of Briggs' head. The 34-year-old Briggs, 26-4 (18), fell forward onto his knees. As referee Pat Russell (USA) counted, it appeared that Briggs, 192¼, Gold Coast, now on his haunches, was ready to stand up, but he then lost his balanced and fell forward again.

Slow-motion television replays of Green's left jab showed that the punch landed high on the forehead of Briggs, affecting his equilibrium. The following morning, Green, rated seventh at cruiserweight by THE RING, recanted his earlier statements and told the media that a knockout punch had landed.

The bout had been moved to Perth on only two weeks notice after the NSW Combat Sports Authority had declined Briggs a license to fight. The New Zealand-born Briggs was making a comeback after more than three years in retirement.

In 2005 and 2006, Briggs fought two 12-round thrillers with Tomasz Adamek, falling just short on both occasions of winning the WBC light heavyweight belt. They were brutal battles that were considered Fight of the Year contenders in the United States. But that was in the past, and the Green debacle made it clear that Briggs can no longer take a punch and should no longer fight.

Promoter: **Green Machine Boxing**
(7-21-10)
Paul Upham

Anselmo Moreno W 12 Nehomar Cermeno

Panama City, Panama: In his return bout with rival Cermeno, Moreno came away with another split-decision victory in another close, tough-to-score contest.

Moreno's seventh defense of the WBA bantamweight belt he captured in 2008 was a WBA-mandated rematch of a March showdown in Venezuela, which many observers felt Cermeno won, despite a late rally by Moreno, who eked out a close split-decision win. That fight would have ended in a draw had Cermeno not been docked a point in the 11th round for low blows.

The momentum of the rematch swung back and forth, and the final tally could have gone either way. Though no points were deducted this time, it wasn't necessarily a clean contest as both fighters received warnings throughout from referee Hubert Earle (Canada).

"Chemito" Moreno, ranked second at bantamweight by THE RING, got off to a strong start in an intense opening round. The southpaw connected with a right hook-left hand combo midway through the round and eluded most of the shots from the charging Cermeno, who was ranked seventh entering the fight. Moreno, 117¾ , San Miguelito, Panama, appeared to have the better of it during the first three rounds with his more accurate punching.

PHOTO BY ALAIN JOCARD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Moreno had his hand raised the 24th-straight time

The pressure of the Venezuela-born Cermeno, 117¾, Panama City, Panama, finally began to get to Moreno in the fourth, when the 2000 Venezuelan Olympian landed the harder shots to change the momentum. Moreno, 30-1-1 (10), rediscovered his southpaw jab, counters, and lateral movement in the seventh, as he used his slickness to thoroughly outbox Cermeno, 19-2 (11), in the seventh and eighth. The ninth and 10th were tough to score as Moreno kept his distance and boxed from a distance while the relentless Cermeno worked but landed little cleanly.

Sensing he was behind, Cermeno pressed for the knockout in the final two rounds. Moreno responded aggressively, landing several uppercuts behind the jab and leaving Cermeno with a swollen left eye. Cermeno, 30, got through with a left hook early in the 12th and a right hand late in the round but couldn't find the kayo shot he sought.

Russell Mora (USA) had Moreno winning 117-112, while Tom Miller (USA) saw a more narrow Moreno victory at 115-113, and John Poturaj (USA) had it 115-113 for Cermeno. THE RING had it 115-113 for Moreno.

Moreno has won 24 straight since suffering a fourth-round, split-decision loss early in his career. He's bested notables Wladimir Sidorenko (twice), Mahyar Monshipour, Tomas Rojas, and Felix Machado along the way. The 25-year old has been mentioned as a possible entry into Showtime's rumored bantamweight tournament. Asked about the possibility during the postfight interview, Moreno said he would like to participate in the tournament.

Promoter: **Promociones y Eventos del Istmo**
(8-14-10) ■

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Aug. 1998: Lewis Bombs Out Briggs: Would The WBC Champ Do This To Holyfield? Color Pinup: Keith Mullings. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Pernell Whitaker, Marco Antonio Barrera, Roberto Garcia.

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corner ever since. He said he's promised Gomez that he'll do whatever it takes to help him fulfill his dreams, even if that means taking a secondary role in camp in favor of a more accomplished trainer at some point. It hasn't happened yet.

"I want to stay with him my entire career," said Gomez.

When Gomez was eight years old, he and Rivota partnered with Hector Ibarra, a US Marine veteran and longtime police officer who runs the LAPD PAL boxing program. Through Ibarra's program, Gomez began traveling to regional and national tournaments, a crucial step in his development. Ibarra has remained a part of Team Gomez as conditioning coach and co-manager, along with Rivota. Gomez described him as "like a second father."

"Everyone thinks they have the next great superstar," Ibarra said, "but I know that we do. I've seen him in those kind of [big] fights, and I know what he's about.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Gomez walks away from Ronnie Peterson, his fifth consecutive knockout victim in five professional bouts. It was on the undercard of the Juan Manuel Marquez-Juan Diaz rematch in Las Vegas. It's part of Golden Boy Promotions' plan to showcase Gomez on high-profile cards.

He's just like a coach's dream. Every coach wishes they could have an athlete like him. I don't know what we did to deserve it, but sometimes we have to pinch ourselves."

Gomez was a reported 120-8 as an amateur before making his decision to go pro. Though he would have been a heavy favorite for a spot on the 2012 US Olympic team, Gomez was turned off by the computerized scoring system and the behind-the-scenes politics that are plaguing the amateur level. "I just wanted to get out of the amateurs," he said.

While De La Hoya stopped Jeff Mayweather in a pay-per-view co-feature in his fifth pro fight and won his first world-title belt in his 12th bout, it appears that Golden Boy Promotions will take fewer chances with Gomez early on. His first five opponents have been easy lay-ups, with only Jamie Orrantia (13-27-5) having had more than five pro fights. Golden Boy has tried to get Gomez noticed, however, starting with his pro debut on the Bernard Hopkins-Roy Jones pay-per-view undercard. Gomez' second bout aired on Telefutura, his third and fourth were on Fox Sports Net's *Fight Night Club* series, and his fifth was on the Juan Manuel Marquez-Juan Diaz II pay-per-view card.

Golden Boy matchmaker Eric Gomez (no relation) said Frankie should get a tougher test in his next fight, which was tentatively scheduled for the September 18 Shane Mosley-Sergio Mora pay-per-view show.

"Frankie's such an aggressive fighter," Eric Gomez said. "It's going to be our job to develop him in the right way, get him the right mix of styles. He's right on schedule. We really haven't seen much; he's just getting everybody out of there. Now is the time to start picking it up more.

"He's progressing well. As a matchmaker, I've seen some of the things he's working on. He's knocking out guys, but how is he knocking them out? He's popping his jab. I've seen him knocking out guys by countering, using his jab more to set up punches, and going to the body."

Gomez' one weakness at this point might be self-promotion or lack thereof. Though talkative among his inner circle, Gomez comes off as shy and soft-spoken among those he doesn't know. That includes members of the media.

"By nature, Frankie doesn't like talking about himself," Rivota said. "That's just him."

Gomez was in the audience at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, Nevada, shortly after knocking out Ronnie Peterson in 2:14 on the Marquez-Diaz II undercard. A reporter caught Gomez looking up at the big screen, which happened to be airing highlights of his fight. The reporter jokingly asked Gomez if he was admiring himself.

"Frankie was a bit insulted by question," Rivota said. "He said, 'No, I'm looking at all the mistakes I made.'"

Maybe the Oscar-like ability to charm the media will come later.

Even if he never opens up verbally, the bilingual Gomez is confident his work inside the ring will be enough to make him a star. He might have a point: Felix Trinidad and Roberto Duran couldn't speak English, but they were so much fun to watch that no one seemed to care. So for now, Gomez is simply focused on living up to the high standards he sets for himself in the gym.

Back in 2007, after he returned home from Azerbaijan, Gomez celebrated his victory with his family and team. The next day, Rivota told him to take his gold medal and put it in a box under his bed. Gomez obliged. To this day, all of his amateur awards are either under his bed or in a closet in Rivota's home.

"I don't let him dwell on his past accomplishments," Rivota said. "Once it's done, it's done. I don't want him to look at past glory."

There is much more glory to be won, and Rivota was one of the first to realize that Gomez is capable of claiming it. Though for Gomez, it's been on his mind since before he could ride a bike.

"That has always been my dream," Gomez said, "to become a championship boxer. I have always wanted to be the best." ■

Don Stewart is a Pennsylvania-based freelance writer and a regular contributor to THE RING.

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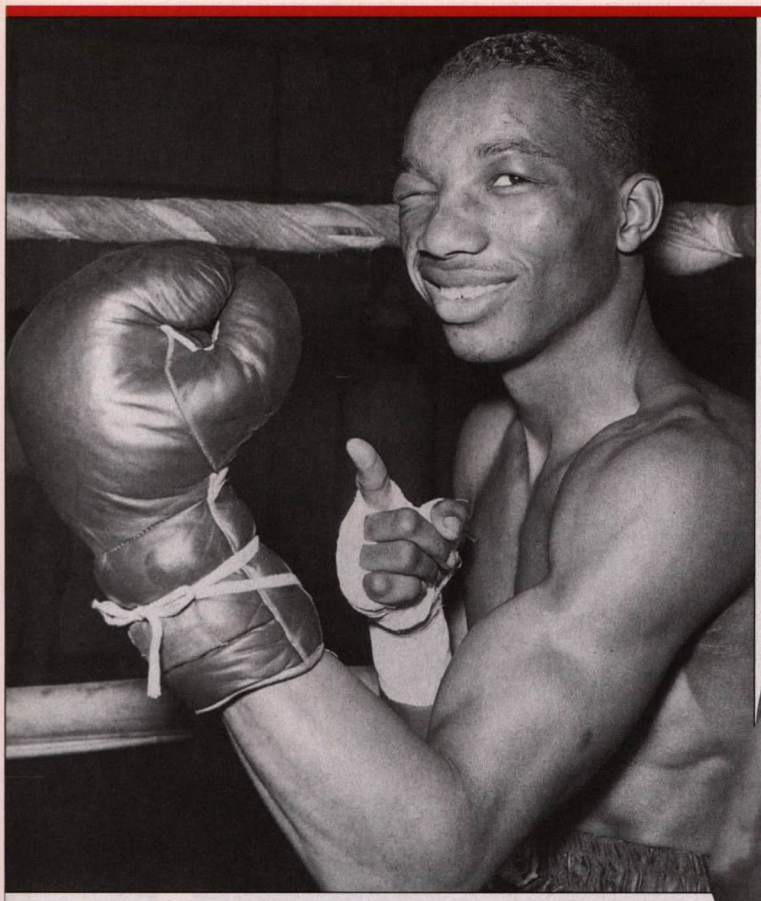
Hall of Fame Profile

THE RING features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

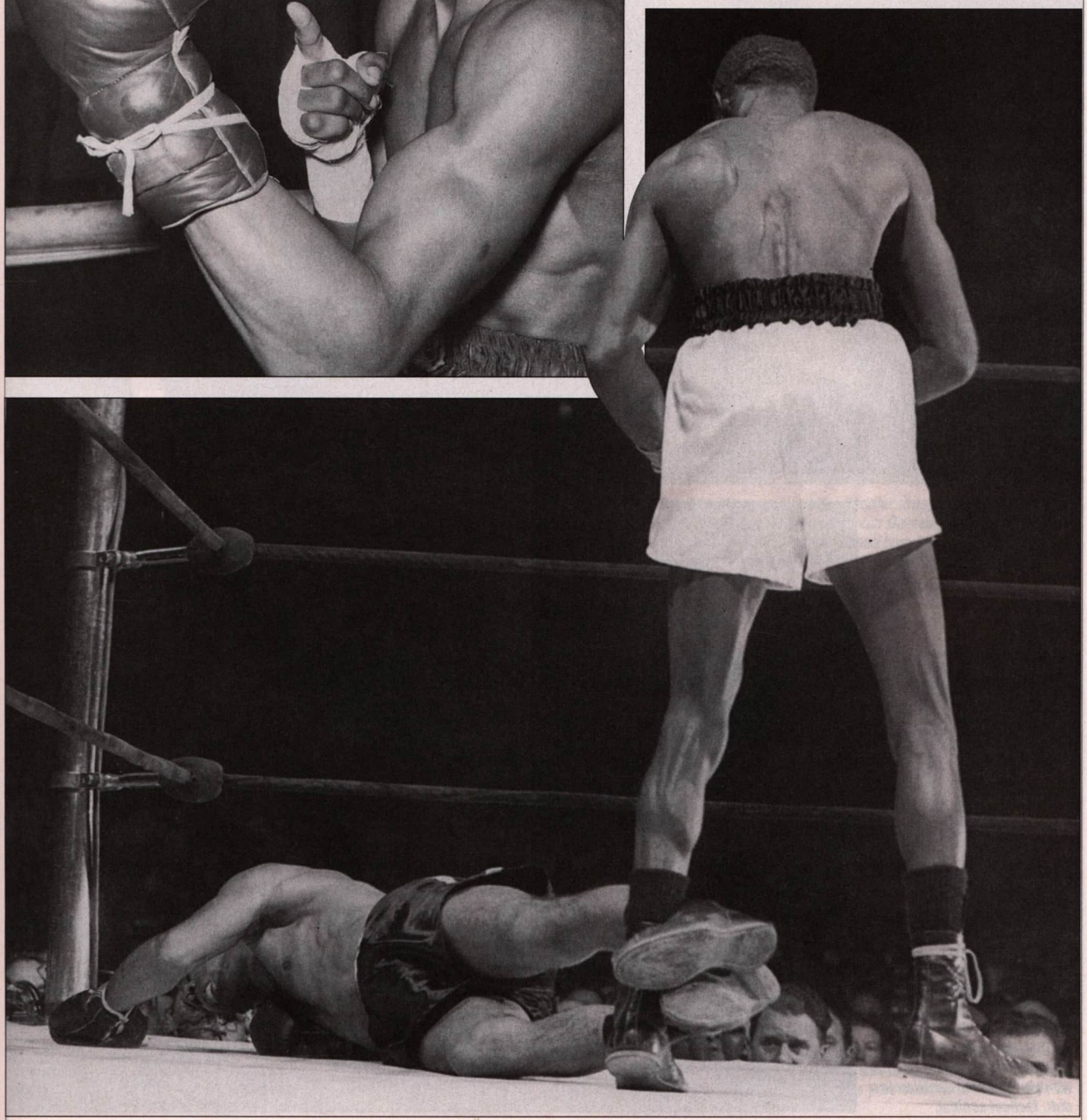
Sandy Saddler

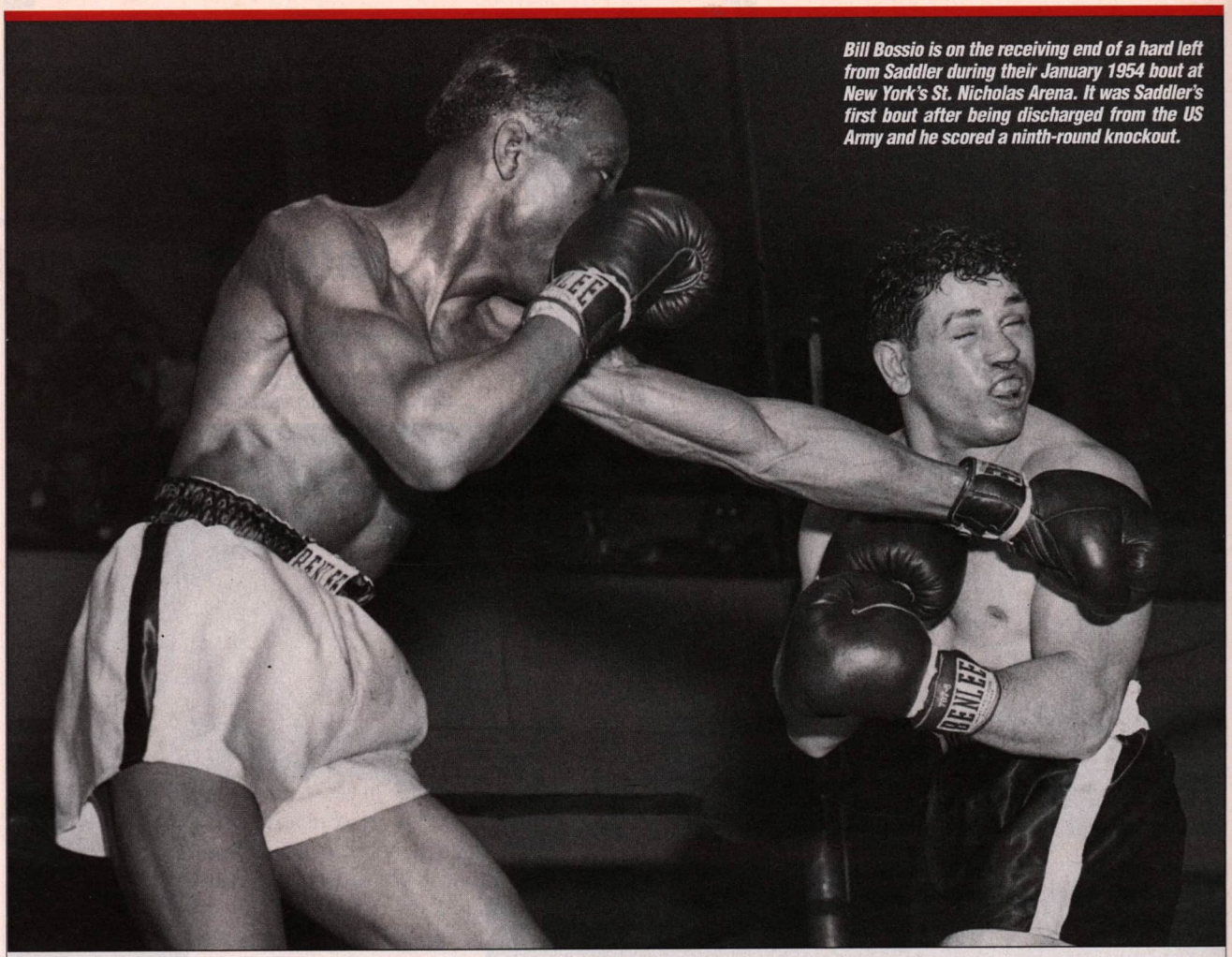
Birthdate: June 23, 1926
Date of Death: September 18, 2001
Birthplace: Boston, Massachusetts
Weight Class: Featherweight, junior lightweight
Record: 144-16-2 (103)
Titles Held: World featherweight, world junior lightweight
Best Performances: Willie Pep (KO 4, KO 8, KO 9), Flash Elorde (KO 13), Joe Brown (KO 3), Orlando Zulueta (W 10, W 10), Harold Dade (W 10), Paddy DeMarco (KO 9), Tommy Collins (KO 5), Teddy Davis (W 15), Ray Famechon (KO 6), Lulu Perez (KO 4), Shigeji Kaneko (KO 6), Lauro Salas (KO 6), Rudy Garcia (W 10), Young Finnegan (KO 5), Jimmy Carter (D 10)
Year of IBHOF Induction: 1990
Background: Born in Boston to West Indian immigrants and grew up in Harlem, New York, where he took up boxing ... Had approximately 50 amateur bouts before turning pro on March 7, 1944, at age 17 ... Suffered lone career knockout loss in second pro fight ... Very tall for a featherweight at 5'8½" and often fought lightweights and junior welters ... "Saddler used his long left jab to soften up opponents before moving in for the kill with rapid clusters of hooks and uppercuts," wrote Patrick Myler in his book, *A Century Of Boxing Greats*. "Unfortunately, he sullied his reputation by unnecessary dirty tactics. Even amateur sparring partners were not spared the notorious Saddler treatment" ... While undoubtedly a very hard puncher, many of his knockouts were of the cut-eye TKO variety, possibly the result of roughhouse tactics ... Won featherweight championship with a fourth-round knockout of Willie Pep on October 29, 1948, at Madison Square Garden ... Lost title back to Pep via 15-round decision on February 11, 1949, in THE RING's Fight of the Year ... Difficulties obtaining a rubber match with Pep led to a stint as junior lightweight champ, which he won with a 10-round decision over Orlando Zulueta on December 6, 1949 ... Successfully defended 130-pound title with a ninth-round TKO of Lauro Salas in April '50 ... Regained featherweight crown with an eighth-round TKO of Pep on September 8, 1950 ... Defended junior lightweight title a final time, scoring a second-round kayo of Diego Sosa in February '51 ... Won final fight in four-bout series with Pep via ninth-round TKO on September 26, 1952, in a bout so foul-filled, both fighters were briefly suspended by the New York State Athletic Commission ... Spent most of '52 and all of '53 serving in the US Army but was allowed to retain the title while in the armed forces ... Made two more successful featherweight defenses after being discharged, winning a 15-round decision over Teddy Davis in '55 and stopping future Hall of Famer Flash Elorde in '56 ... Was forced to retired while still champion after suffering serious eye injuries when a taxi-cab in which he was a passenger was involved in a crash in '56... Worked as athletic director of the National Marine Union and trained amateur fighters at Gleason's Gym after retiring from the ring ... Spent the last years of his life living in a nursing home.



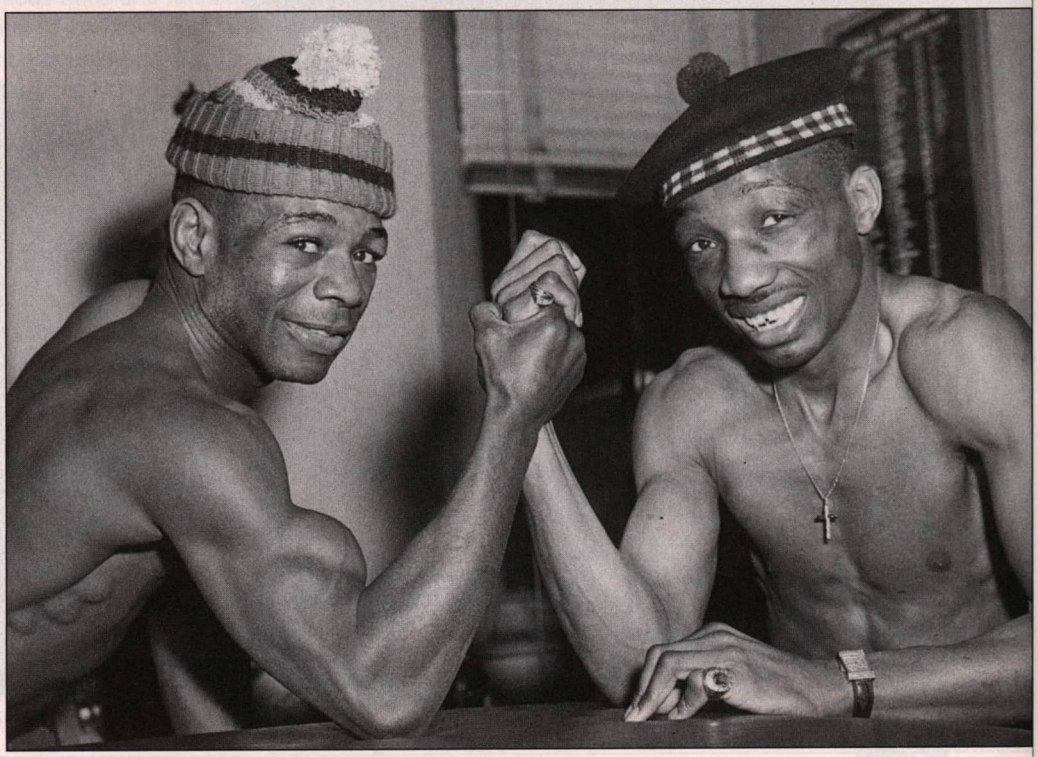
With a knowing wink, Saddler shows off the hand he planned to use in his featherweight championship challenge against Willie Pep. This prefight publicity shot was taken at Saddler's training camp in Summit, New Jersey.

Saddler puts Willie Pep down for the count with a left hook in the fourth round to win the featherweight championship of the world. Pep was also decked twice in the third. It was only his second loss in 137 pro fights.



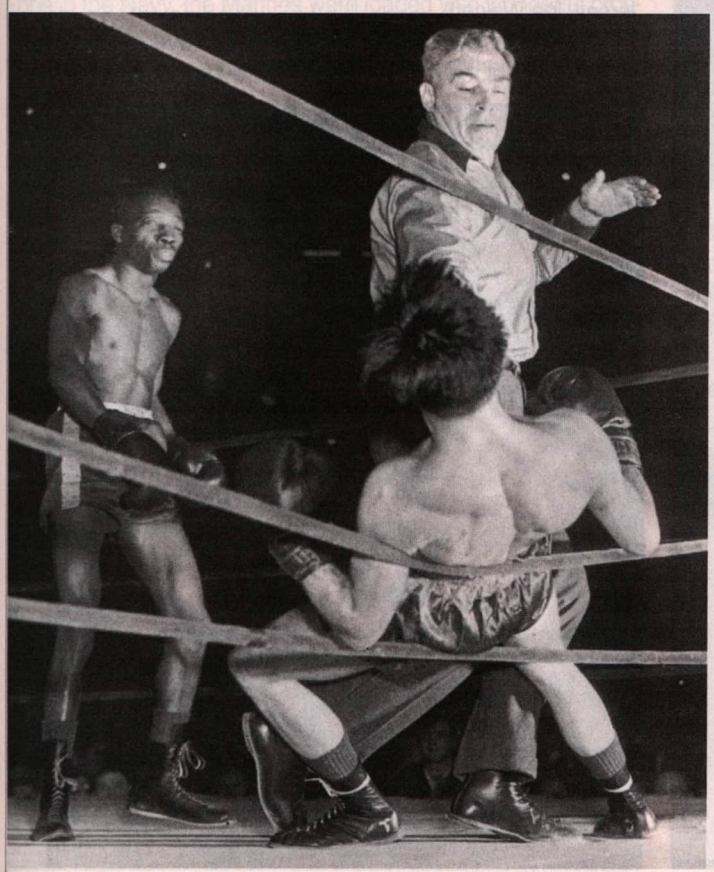


Bill Bossio is on the receiving end of a hard left from Saddler during their January 1954 bout at New York's St. Nicholas Arena. It was Saddler's first bout after being discharged from the US Army and he scored a ninth-round knockout.

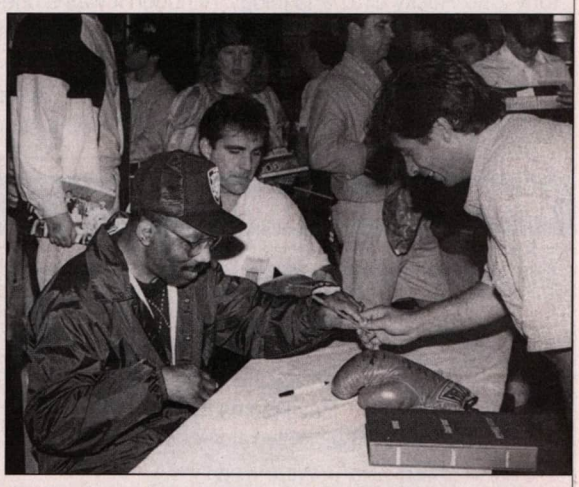


Challenger Teddy "Red Top" Davis and Saddler test their strength with a little arm wrestling prior to their February 1955 title fight at Madison Square Garden, which Saddler won via 15-round decision in a dull, tactical contest.

Saddler and Flash Elorde, who had beaten Saddler in a non-title fight in the Philippines, mix it up during a blood-splattered brawl in San Francisco, California. In what turned out to be his final title fight, Saddler prevailed with a 13th-round TKO.



Referee Joe Zapusta moves in after Saddler dropped Tommy Collins in the fifth round of a non-title fight at Boston Garden in March 1952. Like most champions of the era, Saddler stayed busy between title fights with over-the-weight matches that kept him sharp and helped pay the bills.



Saddler at an autograph signing session at the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1992. Although he was a living legend and charter member of the IBHOF, the ex-champ was broke and would soon be living in a nursing home.

August 1948

COVER STORY: "3rd. Zale vs. Graziano" is Nat Fleischer's account of the final bout of the now-legendary Tony Zale-Rocky Graziano trilogy. Although it was a one-sided affair compared to the first two encounters, Fleischer is effusive in his praise:

"Boxing's most thrilling knockout since Joe Louis battered Max Schmeling into submission back in 1938 was scored by Tony Zale, the two-fisted, 34-year-old steel mill worker from Gary, Indiana, when he regained the world middleweight title from Rocky Graziano at Ruppert's Stadium in Newark, New Jersey, in 1:08 of the third round. The kayo was more sensational than the one Tony gained over the same Rocky at Yankee Stadium in their first engagement or the one that New York's bad boy tallied when he won the crown from Zale in Chicago. It was a clean knockout that laid the defending titleholder flat on his back, and referee Paul Cavalier could have counted to 100 before he got a stir out of the defeated champion."

It proved to be the last victory of Zale's Hall of Fame career. He lost the title to Marcel Cerdan in his next bout and never fought again. Graziano, however, went undefeated in his next 22 fights and earned at shot at then-champion Ray Robinson, who came off the floor to kayo Rocky in the third round.

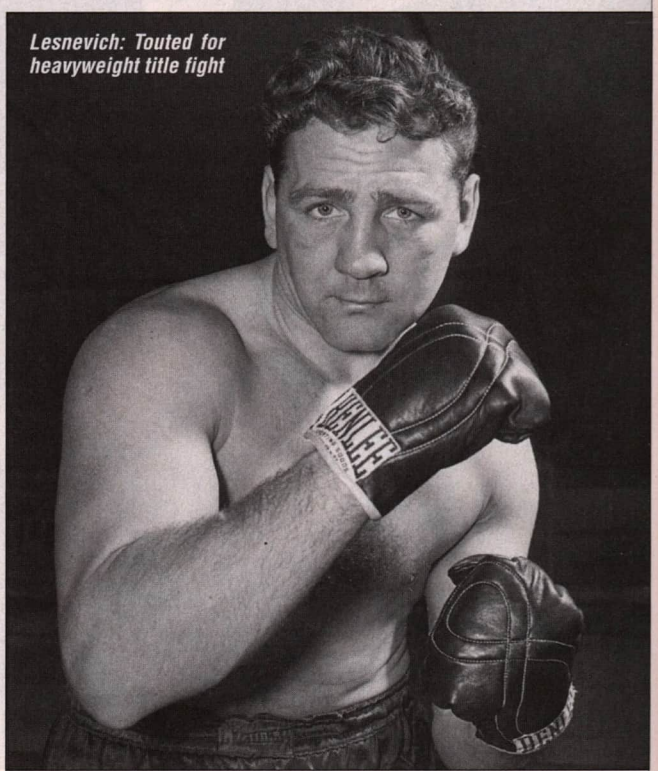
World Champions

(for the period ended June 14, 1948)

Heavyweight: Joe Louis
Light Heavyweight: Gus Lesnevich
Middleweight: Tony Zale
Welterweight: Ray Robinson
Lightweight: Ike Williams
Featherweight: Willie Pep
Bantamweight: Manuel Ortiz
Flyweight: Rinty Monaghan

"Lesnevich Next? Challengers Are Scarce" by Daniel M. Daniel bemoaned the lack of worthy heavyweight contenders for aging champion Joe Louis following "The Brown Bomber's" kayo victory in his rematch with Jersey Joe Walcott.

"During the war, we all were led to believe that it would produce new blood of high caliber. Gene Tunney reported that



Lesnevich: Touted for heavyweight title fight

Abe Simon towers over THE RING's Nat Fleischer (left) and broadcaster Sam Taub

he had seen a marvel in the Army, Jack Dempsey had spied one in the Navy, the Marines were loaded with wonderful prospects," writes Daniel. "But here we are with the same old bunch of heavyweights we had before the war, all of them much older, all of them familiar in style and skills."

Thirty-three-year-old light heavyweight champion Gus Lesnevich was seen as the best of a mediocre lot. But, as Daniel points out, "It would appear that for Lesnevich there is yet the matter of eliminating Ezzard Charles convincingly."

As it turned out, Louis would retire following the second Walcott fight, and, although he would make a comeback two years later, by then Charles had won wide, if not universal, recognition as the new champ. Charles did, however, fight Lesnevich in August 1949, stopping him in the seventh round in defense of the National Boxing Association heavyweight title.

"Ring Skyscraper" by Ted Carroll explores the sad plight of oversized boxers. Jim Cully, who, according to Carroll, "looks like something out of Grimm's Fairy Tales," prompted the article because the so-called Irish giant had recently been banned in New York because he "lacks fighting ability."

Carroll looks at some of the freakishly tall boxers throughout history, many of whom would not be considered all that unusual today. Naturally, former heavyweight champion Primo Carnera is prominently mentioned, as are Jess Willard, Buddy Baer, Abe Simon, Ray Impellitier, Charles Freeman, and "Big" Ben Moroz.

"Like the dinosaurs of prehistoric times who couldn't hold out against the onslaught of smaller, more vicious creatures of that remote period, nearly all of the ring mastodons have come to grief in the ring," writes Carroll. "In spite of their physical advantages, the sight of such overgrown fighters being harried and hurt by smaller, swifter, and more savage opponents always arouses a feeling of pity."

"Ring News From Hawaii" features both a reigning and a future world champion in separate cards.

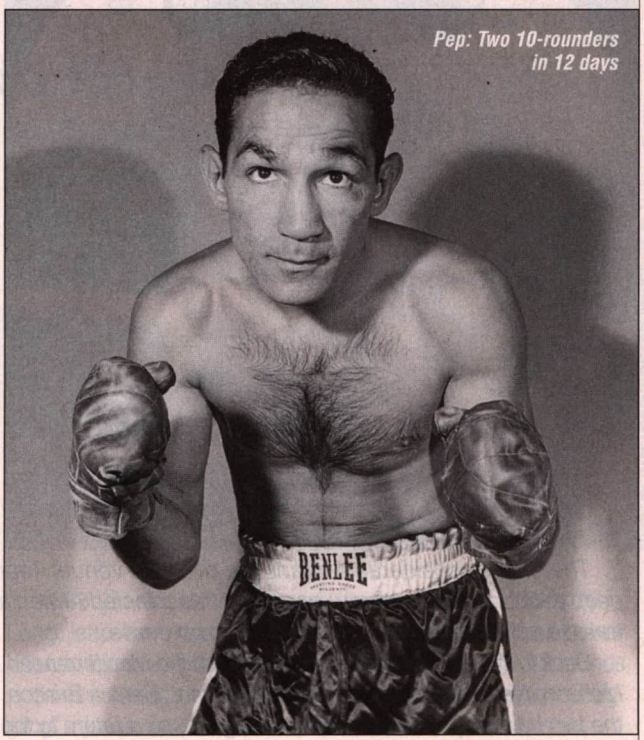
Local hero Bobo Olson, who would go on to win the vacant middleweight championship in 1953, took a 10-round majority decision over Mexican Bobby Castro in front of 4,203 fans at the Civic Auditorium. "The fight was close throughout, with both fighters taking and giving their share of punishment mostly at close quarters," writes correspondent Ted Yamachika.

World bantamweight champion Manuel Ortiz' fight wasn't as well received by the crowd of 6,201 that turned out to see him in a non-title bout against Henry Davis. "Ortiz, obviously fat around the waist at 125¾ and slower than he ever was in a Honolulu, put on the worst exhibition of fighting of his three Honolulu appearances and barely eked out a split decision."

"It Happened In Wisconsin" highlights a local appearance by barnstorming featherweight champion Willie Pep, who won a 10-round decision over Charles Cabey Lewis in a non-title bout. Despite scoring two knockdowns, it wasn't an easy outing for "Will o' the Wisp."

"Sitting in the dressing room after the bout with an ice pack on his left eye and blood dripping from a cut on his right ear, Pep said, 'I got me a black eye that is a beaut. That Lewis is tough and always gives me trouble.'"

Maybe Pep was tired. Just 12 days prior, he'd won a 10-round decision over Leroy Willis in Detroit. ■



Pep: Two 10-rounders in 12 days

[Showdown]

An extensive, analytical forecast of upcoming superfights and critical matches

"Super Six" Stage 3

Arthur Abraham

Main Event 12 Rounds

Carl Froch

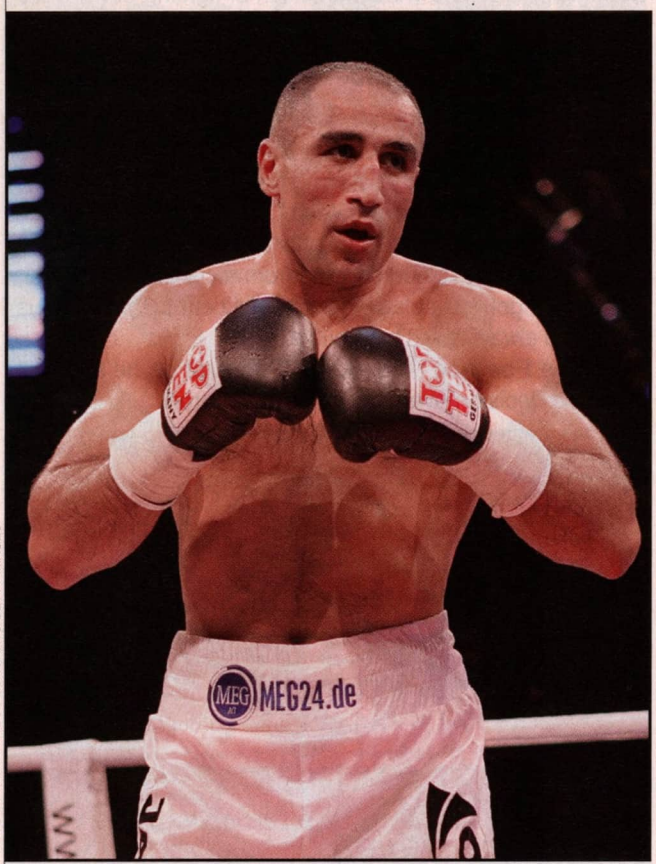


PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Both Carl Froch and Arthur Abraham enter this crucial "Super Six" bout coming off the first losses of their pro careers and are eager to put those defeats behind them with a convincing victory. Moreover, both have to win this Group Stage 3 bout to make it to the semifinal round.

There was considerable wrangling over the venue: Team Froch insisting that it be held in England, while Abraham's people lobbied for Germany, where the transplanted Armenian is a huge box-office attraction. In the end, the supposed neutral site of Monaco was selected as a compromise.

Back in the 1970s, the tiny principality on the Mediterranean hosted a number of outstanding bouts featuring the likes of Carlos Monzon, Nino Benvenuti, Rodrigo Valdez, and Bennie Briscoe. The Froch-Abraham bout, scheduled for October 2, pits arguably the two hardest punchers in the tournament, so a return to those glory days of yesteryear is a distinct possibility.

Arthur Abraham

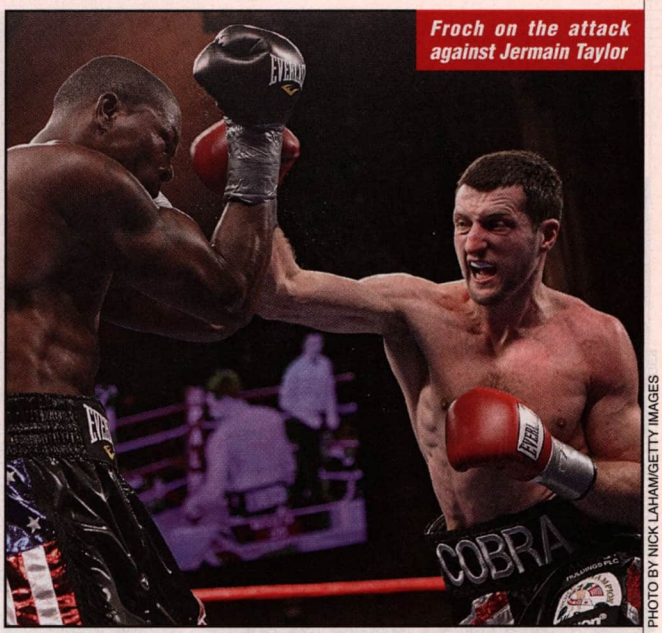
Carl Froch

Record and World Rating

Abraham clips Howard Eastman with a right uppercut

PHOTO BY THOMAS LANGER/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Is 31-1 with 25 knockouts ... Had a 81-3-6 amateur career and was the International German champion in 1997 ... Turned pro in Nuerburg, Germany, in August 2003 ... Won vacant IBF middleweight title in December 2005 ... Tallied 10 successful defenses before relinquishing title and moving up to super middleweight to compete in Showtime's "Super Six" ... Has gone 1-1 (1) in tournament for a total of three points ... Ranked seventh at super middleweight by THE RING.



Froch on the attack against Jermain Taylor

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

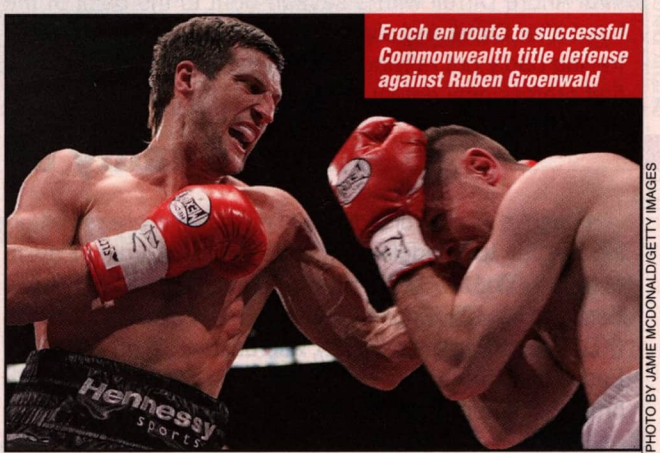
Is 26-1 with 20 knockouts ... Began boxing at age nine ... Won ABA middleweight championship in 1999 and 2001 ... Captured bronze medal at '01 World Amateur Championships ... Turned pro March 2002 ... Annexed British and Commonwealth super middleweight title in September '04 ... Won vacant WBC 168-pound title in December '08 ... Lost WBC belt in April 2010 ... Currently 1-1 in "Super Six" with two points ... Ranked fourth at super middleweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

Lajuan Simon can't block Abraham's right

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Is 30 years old ... Stands 5'10" with a 72-inch reach ... Stocky, powerful physique ... Outstanding upper-body strength ... One-punch knockout power ... Slow feet but quick hands ... Rebounded well from broken jaw suffered in 2006 ... Cuts not a problem ... Superior stamina.

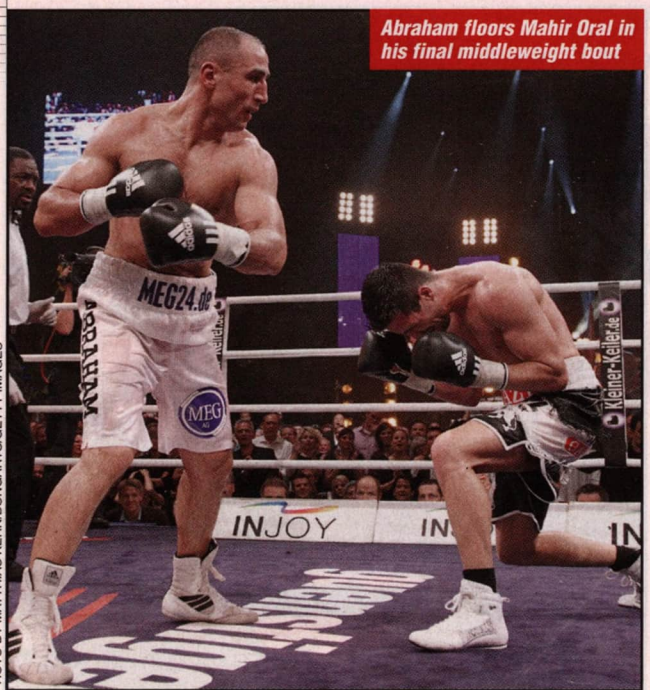


Froch en route to successful Commonwealth title defense against Ruben Groenwald

PHOTO BY JAMIE MCDONALD/GETTY IMAGES

Is 33 years old ... Stands 6'1" with a 74½-inch reach ... Long, lean, and muscular ... Hard puncher who retains power late into fights ... Conditioned to fight at a fast pace for 12 rounds ... Above average hand speed ... Sturdy chin ... History of "niggling" injuries, including perforated eardrum and broken rib.

Arthur Abraham



Abraham floors Mahir Oral in his final middleweight bout

PHOTO BY MATTHIAS KERN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Best Weapons

Relentless pressure, backed up with genuine knockout power in both hands … Just as dangerous in the final round as in the first … Always just one punch away from victory.

Previous Fight

Was disqualified in the 11th round for hitting "Super Six" rival Andre Dirrell with a savage right to the back of the head after Dirrell had slipped and fallen to the floor … Was trailing badly but rallying when the illegal blow resulted in first professional defeat.

Quality of Opposition

Fought a mixture of ordinary to reputable challengers during lengthy IBF middleweight title reign, including Edison Miranda (W 12, KO 4), Khoren Gevor (KO 11), Howard Eastman (W 12), Kingsley Ikeke (KO 5), Sebastien Demers (KO 3), Raul Marquez (KO 6), and Lajuan Simon (W 12) … Ended Jermain Taylor's career in first "Super Six" outing with brutal 12th-round kayo.

Defense

Hides behind unorthodox thicket-of-arms defense that is extremely difficult to penetrate … Constant threat of fight-ending bomb keeps opponents wary … Smothers foes' attack at close range.

Carl Froch

Froch squeaks past Andre Dirrell in his first "Super Six" outing

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Uncompromising aggression … Knockout power in both hands, especially the right … Long arms … Oodles of confidence … Never-say-die attitude.

Lost a hard-fought, competitive 12-round decision to Mikkel Kessler in Kessler's hometown of Herning, Denmark, in second stage of "Super Six" tournament … Had Kessler hurt late in the fight and is convinced it was a hometown decision, with every close round going to the local fighter.

Dominated domestic foes with relative ease, including Tony Dotson (KO 3), Brian Magee (KO 11), Robin Reid (KO 5), Alan Page (KO 7), and Dale Westerman (KO 9) … Handed Jean Pascal his only pro loss (W 12) in a see-saw thriller for the vacant WBC super middle title … Came off the floor to kayo Jermain Taylor in 12th round of WBC defense … Squeaked past Andre Dirrell via split decision in first "Super Six" bout.

Dangerous punch and attacking style keeps many adversaries on the retreat … Lively legs and good instincts help him escape danger … Solid chin … Needs to work on head movement.

Arthur Abraham

Carl Froch

Style

Abraham unloads his heavy guns versus Jermain Taylor

PHOTO BY MICHAEL GOTTSCHALK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Trudges forward behind high guard and then suddenly lashes out with powerpunches ... Meager punch output between flurries ... Frustrates opponents with shell-like defense ... Sets steady, grinding pace ... Deadly finisher once victim is in trouble.

Alternates between long-range boxing and slashing, two-fisted assaults ... Immediately fires back when tagged ... Confidence in punching power makes him difficult to discourage ... Reckless at times ... Usually goes for broke when rival is hurt.

Mikkel Kessler survived Froch's powerful left hand to win grueling decision

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

The Questions

Will he be overly cautious after DQ loss to Andre Dirrell? Can he land his payoff punch against the taller, rangy Froch? Will he miss the support of his rabid German fans? Can he win a close decision on neutral territory?

Can he rebound from the disappointment of first pro loss? Will his chin hold up if tagged by one of Abraham's blockbusters? Can he break through Abraham's formidable guard? Does he bang hard enough to discourage Abraham?

The Outcome

Although Froch did better than Abraham against common foe Dirrell, that might not be the most reliable benchmark for this encounter. While it might serve Froch well to box, his natural instinct is to mix it up, which could prove disastrous against the heavy-handed Armenian. Look for Froch to force Abraham into a punch-up, only to suffer a couple of knockdowns and lose a close decision in a fan-friendly tussle.

By Michael Rivest

No Excuses Necessary

"Two wrongs don't make a right," psychiatrist Thomas Szasz once said, "but they do make a good excuse."

If an excuse was what Steve Geffrard wanted, he could have taken his pick. The list of wrongs in his childhood reads like a Chinese menu of family dysfunction: abject poverty, abandonment, inadequate housing, a negative peer group, and lack of adult supervision.

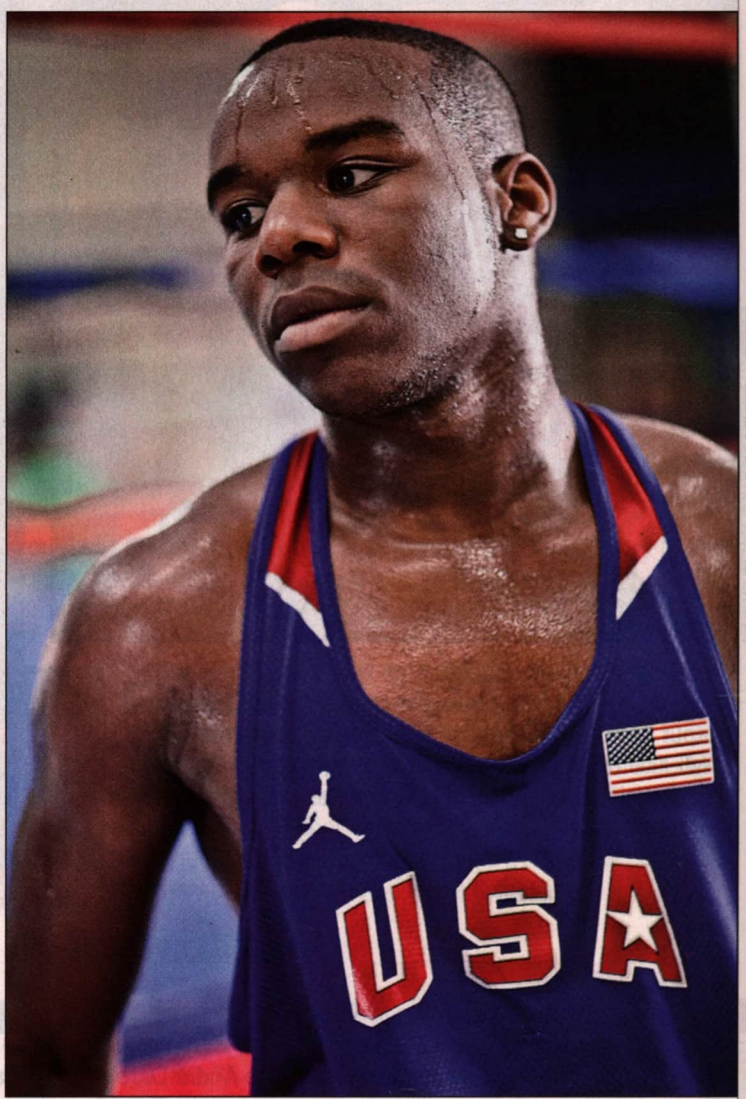
But instead of following a script that had him standing before a family court judge, Geffrard wrote one for himself. It's a story of a young man who waits for life's opportunities, then grabs on with both hands and rises from the quicksand.

"It's all about choices and the sacrifices you're willing to make," said the 19-year-old heavyweight. But when Geffrard said that, it's no intellectual abstraction, as is typically the case with others his age who parrot words adults have told them.

Geffrard's horn-rimmed glasses and gentle demeanor make him look more like an accounting major than a member of the US National Team and the winner of the 2010 National Golden Gloves and US National Tournaments.

Some history: Geffrard's pregnant mother had only been in this country a few months when she gave birth to a son. Anywhere had to be better than her native Haiti. But for reasons unknown, she dropped off her one-year-old son at the babysitter one day and never returned. Geffrard was raised by 15 relatives, all crammed into one side of a South Florida duplex, where he shared a bed with his grandmother and a cousin until the age of 14.

"They are such good, hard-working people," Geffrard said. "My grandmother worked two full time jobs, still does. I learned about work from them, but it's no way to live. The memory of it alone makes me feel sick."



Geffrard is using brawn and brains to succeed

"When he came into the gym the first time at 13," said Rick Broberg, a coach at the Boca Rotan Police Athletic League (PAL) Gym, "he was just like any other kid, nothing special, except for one thing: He had the persistence and determination of an adult. Every day, he'd be the first here and the last out. There was something driving him."

"I loved the independent nature of the sport," said Geffrard. "It was all up to me, nobody else." Geffrard was also getting something else from boxing: "The gym gave me somewhere to be."

"And it's not like he started winning right away either," said Steve Collazo, his coach and trainer from the beginning. "He would just work and work until he learned the skill he wanted, then he'd move onto the next thing."

Geffrard's steely resolve paid off, but it took time.

"I lost my first bout and then a few others later on, but when I went to the 2005 National Silver Gloves Tournament, things started to change," he said. "I was eliminated in the quarterfinals, but I got to see hundreds of boxers from all

Collazo (taping Geffrard's hands) has been a positive influence on his young fighters

over the country, how they moved and what they did. I learned so much.

"He's a student," said Collazo.

"I watch everybody from Pernell Whitaker and Marvin Hagler on TV to even the little kids in the gym," said Geffrard. "Everybody has something to teach you."

When he returned to the same tournament a year later, it was to win his first national championship. Then came another opportunity that changed his life. The 14-year-old Geffrard learned of scholarship opportunities at the prestigious St. Andrew's School in Boca Raton, Florida, the Harvard of high schools.

Such an experience would challenge many adults, but a 14-year-old abandoned kid who has never slept in his own bed? Forget it. Even if he goes, he won't last, not in that world. Hold on, said Geffrard. "Somebody told me once that if you want to be successful, you should hang out with successful people."

So after initially failing St. Andrew's rigorous academic admission requirements, Geffrard bore down on his eighth grade studies, reapplied, and was accepted. Then he said goodbye to life on the margins and applied the lesson he learned in boxing: He watched those who knew what to do and did what they did.

"He was such a driven, self-motivated, and nice young man," said David Ahern, St. Andrew's Athletic Director. "He had a determination you just don't often see in someone that age. It was good for the other kids to know Steve. He was good for the school."

"I used to get up every morning and look out the window," Geffrard said, "and not just in the beginning, but right up until I graduated last year, and couldn't believe that what I was seeing was really happening to me. I knew I could never go back."

Geffrard has just started his freshman year at Nova Southeastern University. His next opportunity: the 2012 Olympic Games. Any remaining doubters?

Life Lessons

It's hard to get Steve Collazo to talk about himself. "That's because it's not about me; it's about the kids, simple as that," said Collazo.

But Collazo's interesting, and not just because he's trained Steve Geffrard since the beginning. Collazo knows a few things about kids at risk, including their fears.

Besides his job as a coach at the Deerfield Beach PAL Gym in Broward County, Florida, Collazo has firsthand knowledge of life's harder edges. He grew up in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. "It's a tough place," he said. "A lot of surviving there is just mental, your attitude in certain situations."

That visceral knowledge helped him in his work with Geffrard. "Steve is a very nice person, almost too nice, you know," Collazo said, laughing. "Sometimes, I'll yell at him the way coaches do in the ring, and he'll get real timid. I have to say to him, 'Dude, you show that side of yourself too much.'

"Lots of these kids are afraid of not making it, not just the ones sent here by the court but the kids off the street too. It's true about Steve."

While lots of kids have memories of parental threats to get them to behave, "Steve used to hear, 'We'll send you back to Haiti.' That was a real fear for him" said Collazo. "I think it's why he was always so determined."

How does it feel to have had a hand in Geffrard's success? "The best feeling for me is when I have him speak to groups of kids in our program, the part where he tells them not to make excuses for themselves."

Website For Amateur Boxing Fans

If you're looking for amateur boxing, check out FrontPageBoxing (FrontPageBoxing.com/amateurs/), a website that serves as a gateway to countless other sites, articles, videos, and lots of other information on amateur boxing.

Created by Jonathan Thyng, a former boxer on the US Air Force National Team, FrontPageBoxing consolidates countless amateur boxing news items and websites into one location. ■

Michael Rivest can be contacted at mrivest2@gmail.com.

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

The Susceptibility Factor

Any fighter can go down from a good punch. One only has to look at the examples of Jermain Taylor and Roy Jones. Why, however, is it when these previously invincible boxers returned to the ring they were subsequently stopped over and over again?

There are all sorts of theories: They were out of shape between bouts, hurt in training, didn't have enough rest between fights, or they were just shot. It could be that their brains were permanently damaged, but no medical test can prove it.

According to respected Connecticut ring physician and sports neurology consultant Dr. Tony Alessi: "Every athlete has a different threshold for neurological events like seizure, concussion, and headache. In the case of boxing and other sports where we must deal with repeated head trauma, the threshold lowers."

Studies show that in athletes with a concussion history, subsequent lesser-intensity impact (such as a glancing blow) can cause a recurrent and more serious concussion.

In 2002, M.W. Collins and colleagues published a study in the *Journal of Neurosurgery* on the cumulative effects of concussion in high school athletes, 60 of whom had no known history of concussion. They were compared to 38 athletes that had experienced at least three concussions. Those with a prior history of concussion were nine times more likely to demonstrate loss of consciousness and greater amnesia following a concussion in comparison to those without a prior history.

We are not just talking about older boxers who have been in too many wars. In fact, studies show that teenage athletes are more vulnerable to concussion and may take longer to recover. Teens are three times more likely to experience a sec-

PHOTO BY MICHAEL GOTTSCHALK/AFP/GETTY MAGES

Team members and medical staff surround Jermain Taylor following his third knockout loss

ond concussion if already concussed during a season. Failure to properly manage a concussion at the time of occurrence can lead to long-term cumulative damage.

The blame falls on many heads.

Trainer Pat Burns, who worked for many years with Taylor, believes that boxers don't receive enough rest after a kayo.

"A boxer may receive a 90- to 120-day suspension from the commission after a knockout, but that is not enough, even after the first kayo," said Burns. "When they are knocked out a second and even a third time, you need a minimum of one year off followed by a thorough medical check-up."

Roger Bloodworth, another veteran trainer, agrees that extensive rest and testing are needed—including extensive evaluation in the gym. "You check their reflexes, speed, reaction time, and balance before bringing them back."

"I can tell by looking at them that they have a problem," claimed Burns. "You have to have an eye for it. It is why training camp is so important. When I bring back a fighter who has suffered a knockout, I see how they skip rope and run drills, as you would do with a wide receiver. I will make them stand on two paint cans for as long as they can (maintaining their balance). When I am ready to see them spar, if I have a 160-pound fighter, I will put them in with a 140-pound guy to start. It is a process."

The commissions and medical personnel are also at fault. Objective testing, in the form of widely used neuropsychological exams, commonly performed in high school and collegiate athletes, could help determine when a boxer could spar or fight again. But this costs money, and few fighters carry health insurance and rarely do commissions pursue funding.

I contend that although these tests would be extremely useful in a boxer's first kayo, they have limited usefulness in a fighter after their second or third knockout. Then the responsibility may be strictly the trainers.

"You have a moral obligation as a trainer to make certain your fighter is okay," said Burns. "I was a former police detective. I had the obligation to prove someone's innocence or guilt and let the cards fall where they may. As a boxing trainer, you have a moral right to know a kid is okay at the end of the day. Otherwise, how can you sleep at night?"

Bloodworth follows the same ethical belief. "The signs are there when a fighter should retire after more than a couple knockouts," he said. "When I was working with an acclaimed amateur champion, he got hurt in one fight with a punch that shouldn't have hurt him. I told him he should quit. He got upset with me. I saw him several years later and he told me I was right."

Whatever the bottom line as to why a boxer is more susceptible to further concussions and neurological dysfunction after one or two severe knockouts, the signs and symptoms need to be recognized. The boxer's deterioration in skill is the key, and those who know him best need to help him make the right decision to step away, whether it's for a lengthy rest or permanently. Matching him or her against a lesser opponent is often the temporary fix, but doesn't solve the problem. It only sets up the boxer for irreversible brain damage.

Death Of A Class Act

Several years ago, a network executive asked then-Nevada commissioner and ring physician Dr. Flip Homansky what he thought of a pay-per-view match that would garner high ratings. One of the fighters had considerable ring age and unbeknownst to most, was a shadow of his former self. Homansky told the executive it would be wrong to place the athlete in yet another war he probably would not win. The executive immediately pulled the plug on the fight. That executive was Showtime's Jay Larkin, who died in August.

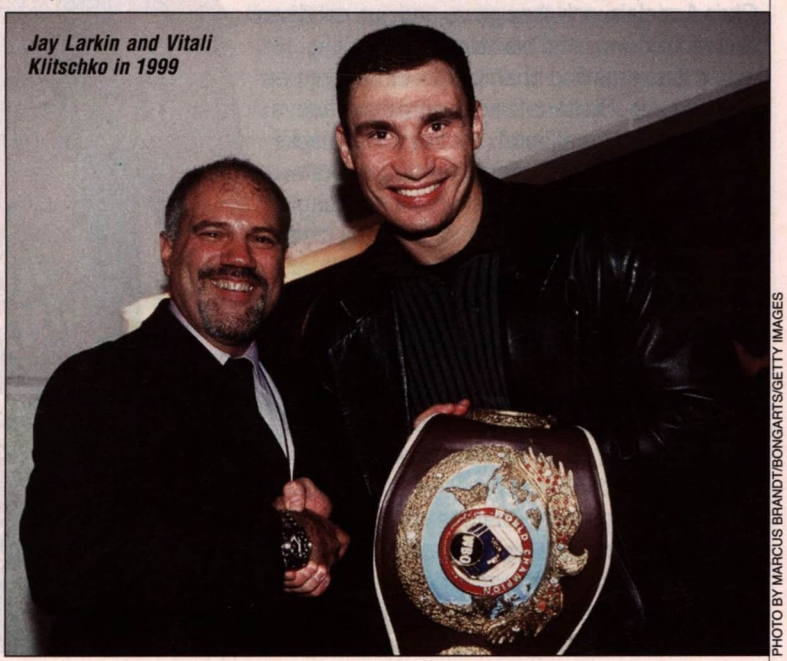
Few ring physicians come in contact with television executives—fewer executives involve themselves in a boxer's health. Jay was different.

In a recent "Fight Doctor" column, I commented on some of my most difficult fights. One of those was Diego Corrales' controversial first bout against Joel Casamayor in 2004, which was televised by Showtime. I stopped Corrales after the sixth round due to a serious cut inside his mouth. At the end of the telecast, Jay came out of the TV truck and told me I did the right thing.

Controversy drives rematches, creates excitement, attracts viewers, and sells tickets. It is only natural to expect an executive producer to take advantage of such situations—not Jay.

When it came time for the rematch, Corrales' promoter attempted to push Jay into promoting the telecast with me as the responsible party necessitating the second fight. Such a tactic would have drummed up plenty of interest and maybe increased TV ratings, but Jay refused. He believed it was unfair to me and would have created a dishonest portrayal of events.

In a sport often lacking integrity, Jay had enough for an army. What an honor to have known him. He will be sorely missed. ■



Jay Larkin and Vitali Klitschko in 1999

PHOTO BY MARCUS BRANDT/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

By Jim Bagg

UF-Seize The Day

As you know well by now, the Baggasaurus gave the marital arts a couple of tries and came to the conclusion that it just wasn't his Bagg. And since there's nothing the Bagghetti & Meatballs won't try once (except for watching *The Bachelorette*—a man has to draw the line somewhere), he gave martial arts a try too. This MMA thing has become too big to ignore. Seriously, every high school dropout with a neck tattoo and an Ed Hardy shirt is buzzing about mixed martial arts. Not in complete sentences, but buzzing just the same. So the Baggnificent decided to check it out a little while back.

As it turns out, MMA ain't his Bagg either. Hey, if you're into one dude lying on his back and wrapping his legs around another dude's hips, by all means, enjoy. If you get a thrill out of watching people kick each other in the shins and you can't find a tape of Muhammad Ali vs. Antonio Inoki, then go for it. And if you like watching guys hit the mat the first time a grazing shot lands but you've grown tired of watching the YouTube video of Danny Green-Paul Briggs over and over, then order all the UFC pay-per-views you would like.

But the Baggazine finds it all rather uninteresting. All, that is, except for Brock Lesnar.

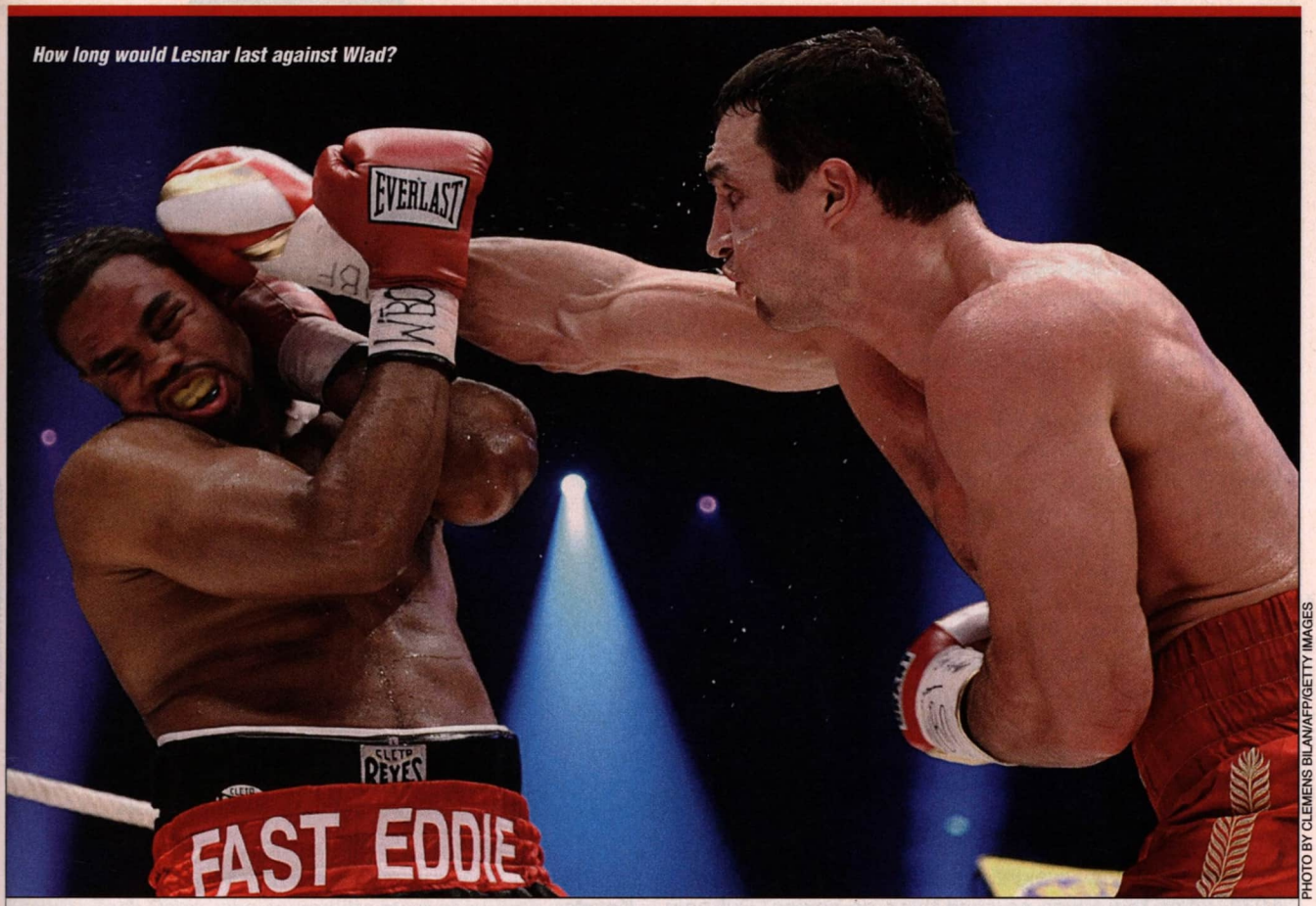
First of all, Lesnar's physique is so freakish you can't look away. His man boobs are just as big as Chris Arreola's, only they go up and out, not down and more down. And his story is fascinating. He was a pro wrestling champ who turned into an MMA champ. He transitioned seamlessly from a fake sport to a real sport. It's like if Haystacks Calhoun became a champion figure skater. (Okay, not the Baggionaire's most applicable analogy, but it sure makes for an amusing mental image.)

And since Lesnar isn't afraid to experiment with new sports (he also tried to make the NFL with no training—who does he think he is, Garo Yepremian?), the Baggalicious has to ask: Might Brock Lesnar be the perfect person to inject some life into heavyweight boxing in America?

There's no denying that the division needs any spark it can get west of the Atlantic Ocean. If it gets any worse, Ross Greenburg is going to ban people weighing more than 200 pounds from entering HBO headquarters, force Jeff Garlin off *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, and

Hey, Brock, wanna try boxing?

PHOTO BY JOSH HEDGES/ZUFFA LLC/GETTY IMAGES



How long would Lesnar last against Wlad?

PHOTO BY CLEMENS BILAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

change the name of *Big Love* to *Medium Love*. What would provide more spark than the reigning UFC heavyweight champ giving our sport a try? MMA fans would want to see what happens. Boxing fans would want to see what happens. Pro wrestling fans would want to see what happens. Even heavyweight-hater Greenburg might take a look-see.

Sure, when athletes come to boxing from other sports, it's hard to take them seriously. Remember Mark Gastineau? Alonzo Highsmith? Tonya Harding? But Lesnar isn't just an athlete. He's a *fighter*. The public will believe in his chances.

And that's a beautiful thing for boxing, because at the top level, he has no chance. If Lesnar fought one of the Klitschko brothers under boxing rules—well, let's just say Haystacks Calhoun would have a better chance of sticking that triple axle. Of course, it's totally unfair to ask an MMA fighter to beat a boxer in a boxing match (just as it would be unfair to ask a boxer to win an MMA bout, though that won't stop that knucklehead James Toney from trying). But perception goes a long way, and "top boxer defeats top MMA guy" would be helpful in making MMA fighters look like second-class citizens. If Lesnar tried boxing, he'd bring in millions of eyeballs initially, then service the sport by getting his muscle-bound rump kicked.

And if you look at what top UFC fighters get paid as compared to what the Klitschkos get paid, you'll see it's not impossible to convince Lesnar to try boxing. There's simply more money in boxing at the highest levels, and, if Lesnar could beat a few journeymen and then get a shot at a Klitschko, who knows, he might even get the lion's share of the purse, a la Gerry Cooney against Larry Holmes.

In any long-term sense, Lesnar is not the savior of heavyweight boxing. But if you're looking for a short-term boost that ultimately serves the sport well and elevates public awareness for whoever gets to be the first to rock Brock, you can't do any better than this MMA monster. Heavyweight boxing isn't much more alive right now than ol' Haystacks Calhoun is. But Lesnar could be just the guy to provide a little mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. (Which reminds the Baggmeister: Maybe there's more than one thing he won't try once. Tonsil hockey with Brock Lesnar is also on the no-thank-you list.)

The Bagginator's Wish List

Let's face facts: It's been a pretty crappy year for boxing fans. The good news to come out of that is that the end-of-the-year Baggie Awards column recognizing the worst of the worst will practically write itself. The bad news is, well, everything else.

So us loyal fight fans are due to start getting some of the things we want. Here's a short list of things the Baggomatic is hoping for in the next few months:

- An abysmal buy rate for the Manny Pacquiao-Antonio Margarito pay-per-view. Sure, that would be a good thing from a moral perspective, but the Baggapple doesn't really have morals. He just wants the PPV to tank so that Bob Arum might be convinced to look beyond his own stable for future Pacquiao opponents.

The Monthly Mailbagg

It wasn't easy to break free from all the hobnobbing and glad-handing, but the Baggorama managed to sneak out of Chelsea Clinton's wedding reception for a few minutes to answer a couple of e-mails:

Five queries for the Baggmeister:

1) Should Margarito and his trainer have been banned for life?

2) Would Paul Williams stand a realistic chance against Money?

3) Has the heavyweight division hit an all-time low?

4) Is Brian Sutherland the worst "boxer" you've ever seen? (Check him out on YouTube.)

5) Finally, who's the Baggmeister's all-time favorite Scottish boxer?

Calum

Five answers for the Fried Calumari,

1) The trainer, Javier Capetillo, absolutely should have been banned for life. As for Margarito, a lifetime banishment is a bit much when there's this much gray area. The Baggarooney would have recommended a two-year ban and a permanent removal of his mullet.

2) It's a waste of time to answer the question. Williams is neither over the hill nor a lightweight.

3) No. The heavyweight division was worse in the year 1278, when there was no such thing as boxing. But only slightly.

4) Not quite. Remember when Horshack fought on *Celebrity Boxing*?

5) All-time favorite Scotsman: Groundskeeper Willie. All-time favorite Scottish boxer: Gotta be Jackie Paterson. The guy died when he got knifed in the throat in a boozed-up scrap. That's exactly how the Baggnanimous wants to go.

Hello Mr. Bagg,

Great column in the September issue. I sure hope Junior Mercante picks up a copy. Regarding referee performance, visibility, and competence or lack thereof, and keeping in mind that their main duty is to protect the safety of the fighters, I have two questions for you: Do you think Richard Steele's stoppage of the Chavez-Taylor fight was the right call? Who would you rate as the best and worst referees of the last 20 years?

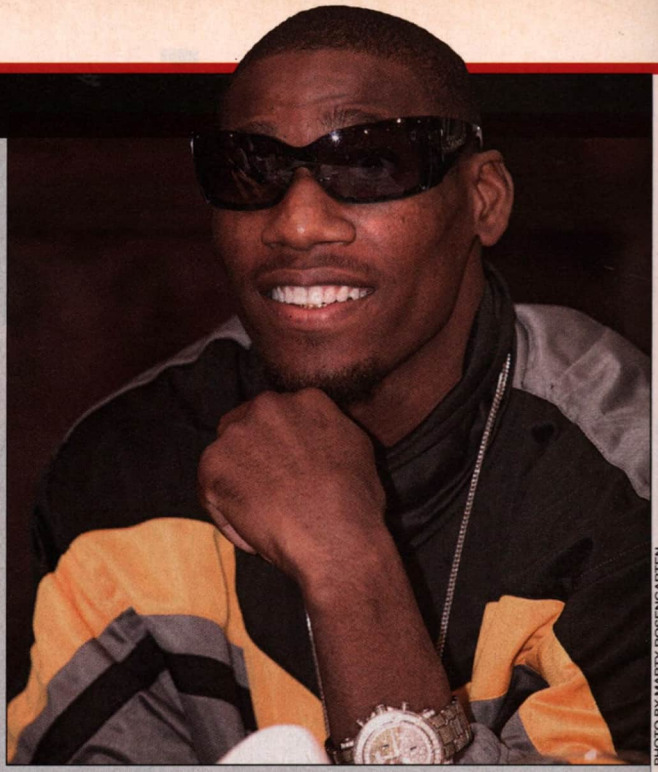


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Mayweather will never fight Williams

Thank you,
Brian Key
Pineville, KY

Keyster,

Wow, complete sentences out of a Kentuckian—will wonders never cease? Speaking of the amazing, Mercante's refereeing was so egregiously awful that it got the Baggzinsky and Ivan Goldman on the same page. That doesn't happen every day.

On to your questions: The Baggmatician had money riding on Meldrick Taylor on March 17, 1990, so Steele's call was an absolute disgrace. As for the best and worst refs of the last two decades, the best is probably Tony Weeks (can you think of a fight he ever screwed up horribly?), and the worst, edging out Mercante Jr., is veteran Arizona ref Bobby Ferrara. Go find yourself some video of the Omar Weis-Hector Camacho Jr. fight from 2002. The Baggapotamus hasn't seen a ref take sides like that since the last time Enrico Palazzo called balls and strikes.

• A meaningful fight for Nonito Donaire. The fact that he used his last fight to experiment with the southpaw stance tells you everything you need to know about how tough he's being matched.

• A passing score on the LSAT for Juan Diaz. If he fails that thing, "The Baby Bull" is going to have to keep fighting. And that wouldn't be good for anyone.

• A situation entering the Arthur Abraham-Carl Froch fight where the loser won't make it to the "Super Six" semifinals. As that's the last bout of Group Stage Three, it would be fun if it turned into a win-or-go-home situation. (Although, to be honest, if the Baggapalooza shared a bed with Rachel Cordingley, he'd never leave home in the first place.)

• More appearances for Mike Tyson on *Entourage*. Give the Baggamaniac one good reason why they shouldn't kill off that annoying Turtle character and make Iron Mike the fourth member of the crew.

• While on the subject of HBO appearances for deserving pugs, a middleweight championship fight on HBO between Sergio Martinez and Dmitry Pirog. Sure, Pirog could use a little more seasoning, but this fight just reeks of fun. And nobody is more of an expert on things that reek than the Baggorrhea.

Donaire deserves a meaningful match

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

And The Stingray Goes To ...

The modern-day Marion Wilson, tough-as-nails heavyweight spoiler Zack Page, who scored the most noteworthy win in a Stingray-licious sub-.500 career when he ruined the comeback of Kevin McBride in July via eight-round unanimous decision. You might remember McBride as the man who closed the door on Mike Tyson and capitalized by not fighting for 10 months and then losing two of his next three, against fellow slow white guys Mike Mollo and Andrew Golota. After a three-year layoff, McBride returned in what was supposed to be a sure thing against Page, who came in at just 20-29-2 (7). Usually, the guy who's 34-6-1 (29) is expected to win that fight. But Page, who could make cruiserweight if he wanted to and gave up 76½ pounds against McBride, outworked the overweight Irishman and scored shutouts on two of the three judges' scorecards.

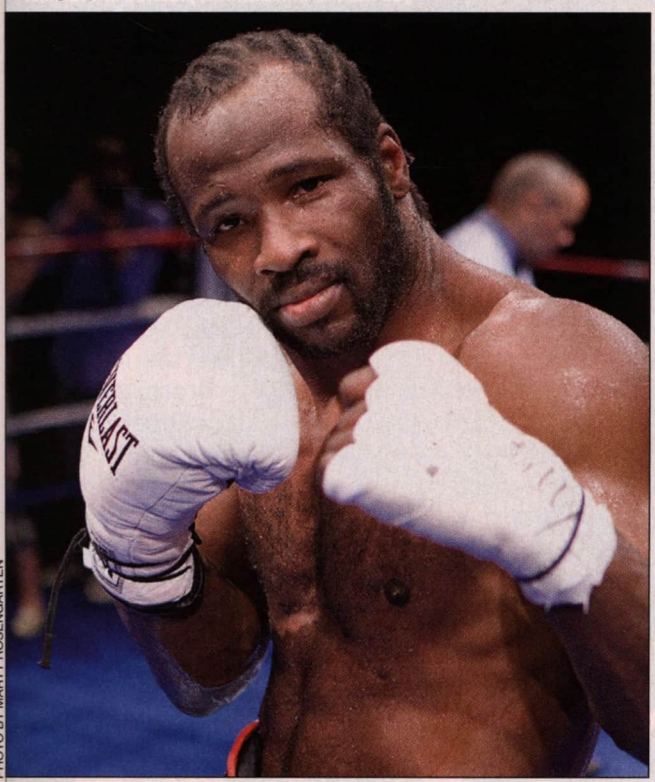


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Page: Overdue Stingray winner

This wasn't the first Stingray-like behavior from Page. Earlier this year, he beat 19-0 Sebastian Koeber. In 2009, he scored back-to-back wins over two prospects with a combined record of 24-0. In '08, he beat onetime prospect Cisse Salif. In '06, he upset former light heavyweight titlist Lou Del Valle. In '05, he beat the very same Jeremy Bates who would get a date with Evander Holyfield the following year.

And Page has only been stopped twice: once in his pro debut and once against unbeaten Alonzo Butler in '06. Not bad for a guy who routinely gives away 20 or 30 or 76½ pounds. Page probably deserved a Stingray Award long ago, but he kept slipping through the cracks. Not this time. You beat a recognizable name like McBride, you're no longer a McBridesmaid. You're a Stingray winner. (And in this case, you're a Stingray winner who got right back out there and lost to Juan Carlos Gomez three weeks later. But, hey, if you didn't lose a lot along the way, you wouldn't qualify for the Stingray, right?) ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

[Come Out Writing]

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 114, Blue Bell, PA 19422.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

Who Are The Real Mexicans?

While watching the Juan Manuel Marquez vs. Juan Diaz rematch at a movie theater, a promo came on for the Shane Mosley-Sergio Mora fight, which is being held two days after Mexico's 200 years of independence. The promo makes it seem as if Mora is Mexico's hope to do to Mosley what Fernando Vargas, Oscar De La Hoya, and Antonio Margarito couldn't. However, the only fighter who is truly from Mexico is Margarito. The promo made it seem as if all Mexico will be backing Mora, but I bet not too many people in Mexico know who he is. Mora is Hispanic, but not a full-blooded Mexican like a Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, Fernando Montiel, Jorge Arce, Julio Cesar Chavez, etc. If they want to keep this fight truly in accordance with Mexican independence, then Saul "Canelo" Alvarez, who is fighting on the undercard, should headline this fight. It is fighters like Alvarez that are examples of Mexico's best-exported fighters.

MANUEL ROSALES
San Antonio, TX

Chad Really Bad

Anyone who saw the Jean Pascal-Chad Dawson fight shouldn't have been surprised that "Bad Chad" turned out to be just what his nickname suggests—"bad." Not bad as in intimidating, just plain bad, as in inferior. Dawson is a competent fighter, but he proved that taking the fight to the other guy isn't always a good strategy if you don't do enough once you get there. He seldom let his

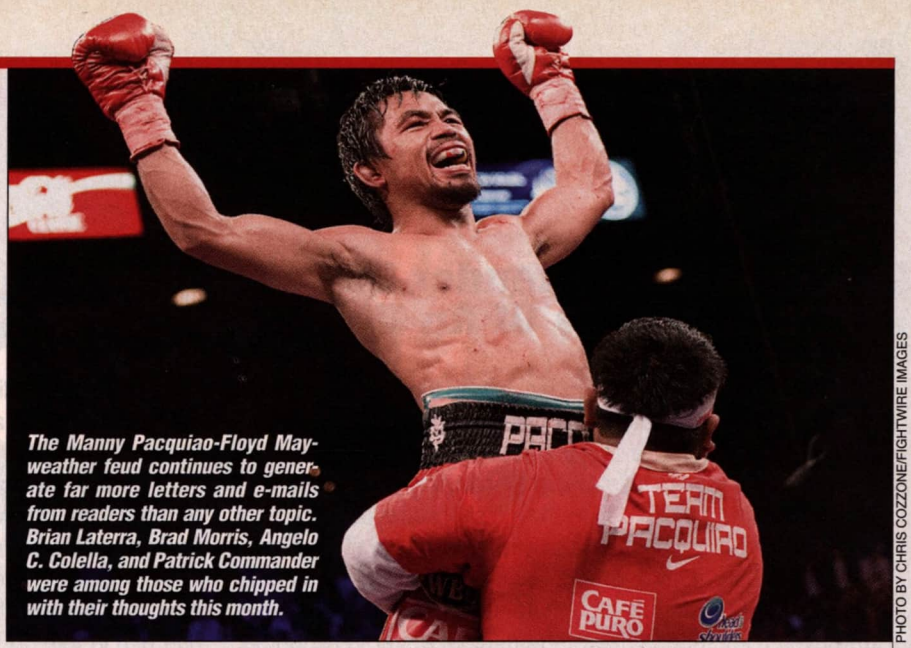
Reader Joe Thompson writes to remind Chad Dawson that you've got to throw punches if you want to win. Dawson, pictured in a familiar defensive posture against Jean Pascal, lost his chance to win the vacant RING light heavyweight championship by being too passive.

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

hands go once he got Pascal in his sights, and I'll never understand Eddie Mustafa Muhammad's advice to Dawson to "go to his body." That's a good strategy part of the time, but more diversity in Dawson's punches (and more of them) might have been better advice and made a difference in the fight.

Pascal is a real cutie, reminiscent of Kid Gavilan, who used to win fights by stealing the last few seconds of every round with a flurry. And like Gavilan, don't expect Pascal to knock out many opponents.

JOE THOMPSON
Charlotte, NC



The Manny Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather feud continues to generate far more letters and e-mails from readers than any other topic. Brian Laterra, Brad Morris, Angelo C. Colella, and Patrick Commander were among those who chipped in with their thoughts this month.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Mabuza MIA

Kaizer Mabuza upsets Kendall Holt, and what does he get for his performance? No fights lined up for a guy who deserves an opportunity against the best fighters in the 140-pound division. I feel that after what Mabuza did to Holt, he is a tough opponent for any man in the division. Promoters should do the right thing and give this Mabuza a chance to fight the best. I think that a fight with Mabuza would be a good bout for a comebacking Zab Judah.

SAMUEL SMITH
Goldsboro, NC

Tit For Tat

It never ends with Fraud Mayweather. Now that Manny Pacquiao has agreed to every one of Fraud's stipulations, it is still not good enough. If the definition of a true champion means you fight the best competition, Fraud should have his belts removed immediately. He chooses only to fight men past their primes (Oscar De La Hoya) or men who are smaller (Juan Manuel Marquez). If the deck is not stacked for Fraud, he won't fight. Mayweather consistently spits in the face of boxing fans. He is single-handedly ruining boxing for a generation and smugly smiles the whole time. Thanks, Fraud Mayweather. You've managed to rip our hearts out again.

BRIAN LATERRA
laterra76@hotmail.com

Before anyone accuses Floyd Mayweather of ducking Manny Pacquiao, remember what Ray Leonard did to Marvin Hagler years ago. He dangled a fight in front of him and then retired, letting Hagler get beat up in two wars with Thomas Hearns and John Mugabe. Leonard then un-retired and set the terms of their encounter from the ring size to the length of the fight. Pacquiao needs Floyd, and Floyd knows it. He can take all the time in the world.

BRAD MORRIS
Astoria, NY

My opinion of Floyd Mayweather has changed. I thought he was on his way to becoming one of the best boxers of all-time until he retired so that he did not have to fight the top welterweights at that time. He then came back to fight guys smaller than him or guys over the hill. Mayweather should not be compared to greats such as Ray Leonard and Tommy Hearn's who fought everybody, including each other. Manny Pacquiao doesn't need Mayweather to prove his greatness. He has already done that. Moreover, if Mayweather wants to change the rules, how about weighing in the night of the fight, not the day before, so he can't come in 10 to 15 pounds more than his opponent?

ANGELO C. COLELLA
Lynn, MA

I understand the impatience exhibited by so many concerning the perceived desire (or lack there of) of Floyd Mayweather to fight Manny Pacquiao. What gets me is how many clamored for Mayweather to fight a legitimate welter and then, after he schooled Shane Mosley, those same people still balked. They say Mayweather has to have some sort of advantage before he'll fight someone: Reader Stuart Mills wrote that Mayweather sucker-punched Arturo Gatti. But "protect yourself at all times" means let the ref do his job and you do yours. Mr. Mills also stated that Mayweather made Oscar De La Hoya drain himself, but he's wrong. Mayweather fought De La Hoya at junior middleweight and weighed in at 148 for that fight. It was Pacquiao who fought a drained Oscar at welter. I am one of the millions waiting for the fight to happen, but professional boxing is a business and the wrong step could be extremely costly.

PATRICK COMMANDER
Atlanta, GA

Pound-For-Pound Writer

If there was such a thing as the pound-for-pound king of journalism, RING Contributing Editor Eric Raskin would be my top pick. His article in the September 2010 issue ("Opposites Attack: The Pacquiao-Mayweather Debate Has Deepened A Great Divide") was the finest non-biased article I've ever read. Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao are both great examples of boxing's elite. Mr. Raskin pointed that out without choosing sides. That's why I love THE RING.

DWAYNE PERKINS
Wilmington, DE ■

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By Eric Raskin

Is Another Contender On The Brink(ley) Of An Upset?

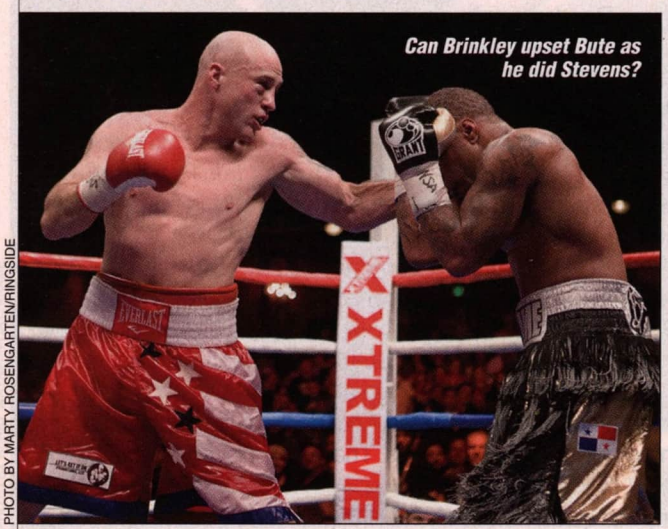
In July of 2007, **Alfonso Gomez** ended the career of **Arturo Gatti** with an unexpected knockout win. In June of 2008, **Sergio Mora** scored a major upset by outpointing **Vernon Forrest** for a junior middleweight belt. And just recently, in August of 2010, **Cornelius Bundrage** shocked most observers by TKOing **Cory Spinks** to claim a 154-pound title of his own.

So we know alumni of the reality-TV show *The Contender* are capable of upsetting stars and becoming titlists. But what we haven't yet seen is one of them upset a star in his prime. Gatti and Spinks were both used up, and Forrest was certainly past his best. That's why if **Jesse Brinkley** defeats **Lucian Bute** on October 15 at the Bell Centre in Montreal, Quebec, it just might be the biggest win yet for a *Contender*-turned-contender.

Though Bute, 26-0 (21), is a heavy favorite (betting site WilliamHill.com has him at 14-1), Brinkley, 35-5 (22), is not without his credentials. He's won nine straight fights, his last three coming against opponents with a combined record of 57-4-1: **Joey Gilbert**, **Mike Paschall**, and **Curtis Stevens**.

The 32-year old from Yerington, Nevada, certainly doesn't think of himself as a 14-1 underdog.

"I have no idea why people don't take me seriously," Brinkley told THE RING. "I don't know if they look at me like a little Opie Taylor boy with a pole on his shoulder walking to the pond with his dad, I don't know what it is. But I know this: I have nothing to lose against Bute. Nothing. The worst thing that can happen is I become another victim of Lucian Bute. Imagine that. He wins every fight. He's supposed to win every fight, so the worst thing that can happen is you become another guy on his knockout list. I honestly have nothing to lose with this guy. And [trainer] **Peter Manfredo Sr.** is preparing me to go up there and give him hell. When I beat this guy, it's not an upset in my mind."



Can Brinkley upset Bute as he did Stevens?

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN/RINGSIDE

It might sound like pure bluster, but Brinkley does have a game plan that he and Manfredo have devised specifically for Bute.

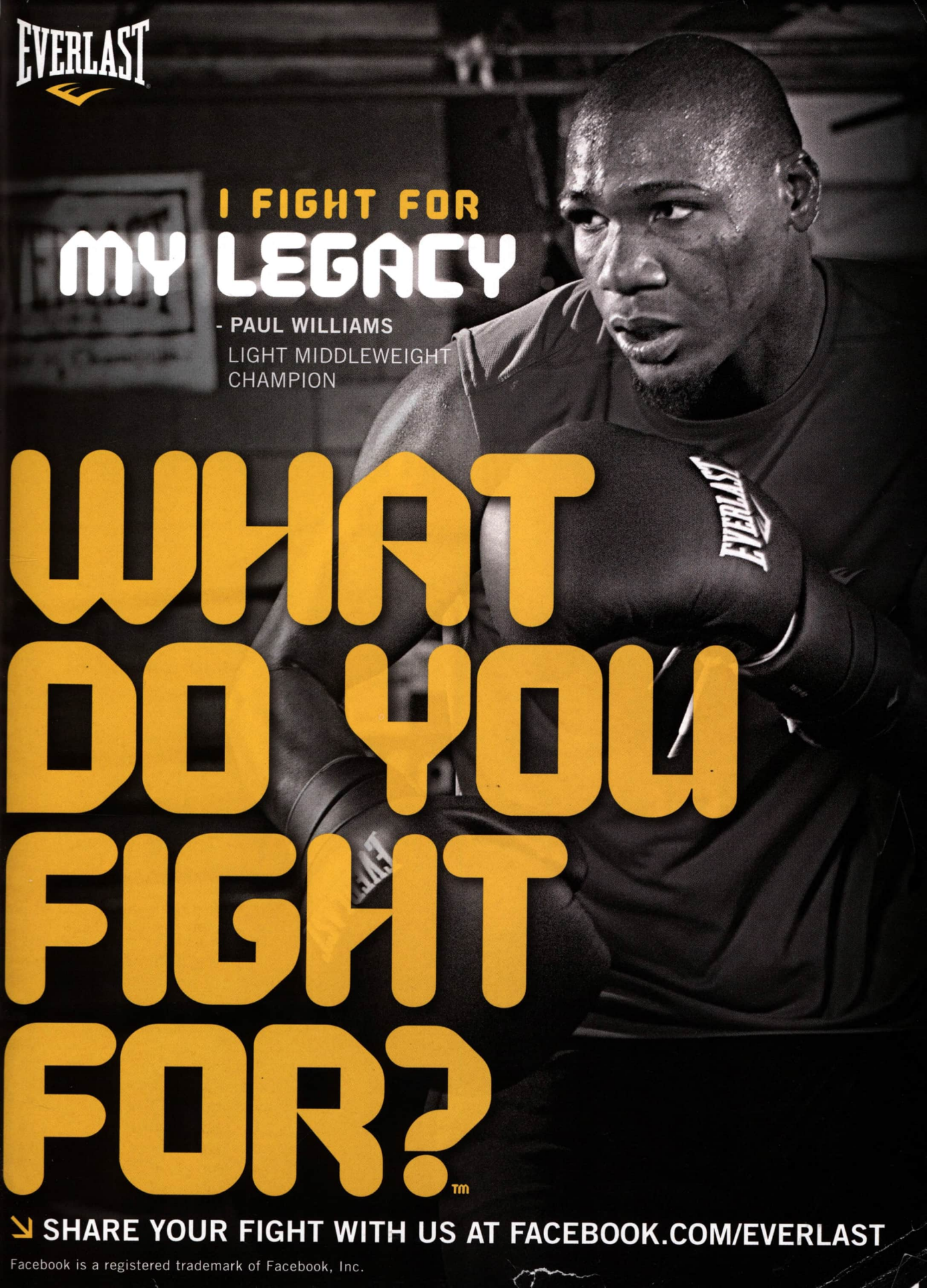
"His last few fights have all been one-punch knockouts," Brinkley said. "So we know he has power. But everybody who he fights is the same kind of person, just with different names. They're all stiff. They're all walking straight into him because they think he goes to sleep because of how **Librado Andrade** hurt him in the 12th round. I think people are underestimating his chin, and they're underestimating his left hand, obviously. And they're walking straight into him like big Frankensteins. You gotta be jukin' and jivin' and rollin' and slippin'. You gotta be James Toney on that guy, rolling your shoulders. You want to show head movement. You want to show body movement. You want to move lateral, go left and right with him. So we're working on being on my toes to the point that I've got blisters on my toes right now."

Brinkley insists he wasn't mature enough to make the most of his time on *The Contender* (where he lost to Mora in the Season One semifinals). He claims he's a smarter fighter now and that he's maximizing his potential by training in Rhode Island, far away from his family and friends. And he's definitely not underestimating Bute, admitting that he needs to "pitch a perfect game" in order to dethrone THE RING's number-one rated 168-pounder.

"I never, ever dreamed that it would be easy. I never dreamed that a title was going to be given to me. I always expected it would be tough. And sure enough, it is. He's a beast. And it's exciting to me. I'm ready for the challenge. I'm ready to go for it."

Listen Up

Though nothing was official as of press time, all indications were that **Vitali Klitschko** will return to the ring October 16 in Hamburg, Germany, against the woefully undeserving **Shannon Briggs**. It's tough to fault Klitschko, who tried to make a fight against **Nicolay Valuev** and couldn't strike a deal ... On October 24, England's **Rendall Munroe**, winner of 11 straight, heads to Tokyo, Japan, for his first alphabet title shot, against **Toshiaki Nishioka**. Nishioka will be attempting his fifth defense of his junior featherweight belt ... Though ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* has concluded its season, there will be a "boxing special" on the network on November 11, from the New River Marine base in Jacksonville, North Carolina. Tickets won't be available to the general public; all seats are freebies for the local military personnel. ■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